(54) Title: SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE SYSTEM FOR ENABLING WEIGHT CONTROL

(57) Abstract: A weight control software system and method may provide an interactive software environment to a user via a network to enhance the ability of users to follow a weight control program. The weight control software system may generate meal plans that are automatically updated based on an updated weight of the user following the weight control program. A variety of tools may be integrated into the weight control software system and be interoperable to utilize information entered by the user or generated by the system in controlling body weight of the user.

SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE SYSTEM FOR ENABLING
WEIGHT CONTROL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

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Technical Field of the Invention

The principles of the present invention are generally related to weight control, and more specifically, but not by way of limitation, to a software and hardware system operable to enable weight control.

10 ### Description of Related Art

People have long sought ways to control (i.e., lose, gain, and/or maintain) body weight. Controlling body weight has many implications to people's lives, including: physical health, mental health, and professional and social status. Entire industries have been formed to assist individuals who seek assistance in

15 weight control. Such industries include medical care, food production, publishing, workout facilities, and support groups, to name a few.

Weight control programs (e.g., diets) to control body weight have been developed by many individuals, groups, and organizations and disseminated throughout the different industries. Some of the weight control programs may be

20 considered proprietary and others are publicly available. For example, medical organizations may provide patients with weight control programs that have been developed for patients, but not made publicly available otherwise. Developers of weight control programs earn money by making the programs publicly available through various sources, including books, videos, lectures and tapes, for example.

25 And, of course, the rules of weight control programs and the food types that they prescribe are all different. The diversity of different weight control programs throughout the weight loss industry is considerable: diets range from those ordered by a physician as part of a treatment for a disease or clinical condition to calorie-counting diets, vegetarian diets, protein rich diets, sodium gram diets, fluid-

30 restricted diets, renal diets (which utilize fluid, protein and specific electrolyte restrictions such as sodium, potassium, etc.) and cardiac diets (which utilize specific fat, salt, and cholesterol restrictions).

No matter which of the various sources a developer of a weight control program utilizes to make its weight control program publicly available or which type of diet the weight control program utilizes, it is the responsibility of the individual following the weight control program to adhere to the rules, guidelines,

5   and conventions (general rules) of the weight control program. These rules may define the specific foods, times to eat and exercises to be performed, for example. And, as most individuals who have followed a weight control program can testify, in addition to maintaining self-motivation, learning and following these often complex rules tend to be the most difficult parts of staying on, and achieving

10 success with, a weight control program. What is needed is a way to provide dieters with the ability to maintain food consumption within the general rules of a weight control program and to maintain motivation in following these rules.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

15 To overcome the problems of having to follow the complex general rules of a weight control program and to promote self-motivation to adhere to such a weight control program, a software and hardware system has been developed that allows users to actively participate in following a weight control program. A weight control software system, which is provided by a weight control software provider,

20 provides an interactive software environment (weight control software system) delivered via a network. The weight control software system provides and enhances the ability of users to follow a weight control program.

The weight control software system includes several different software modules and tools (e.g., a journal, a weight tracker, a meal planner), which (i) are

25 highly interactive and personalized according to personal user input and individualized feedback produced by the weight control software system based on personal user input, and (ii) possess a high level of interoperability and interconnection within the interactive software environment and underlying architecture (including the modules and tools) such that user input in one module or

30 tool may update other modules and tools for increased user efficiency and personalization.

The specific rules of any weight control program employed by the weight control software system, or any other element of the weight control program, may

be delivered to the user either (i) from external sources independent of the weight control software system (e.g., from books, videos, counseling, lectures, and standalone software), or (ii) exclusively via the weight control software system. Regardless of whether these rules or other elements of a weight control program

5   are delivered by independent, external sources or solely by the weight control software system, the rules are incorporated into the weight control software system and govern the functionality of the underlying modules and tools. Accordingly, the overall weight control process is automatic and seamless so that the user is able to focus on the ultimate goal, which is controlling body weight via the weight control

10   program as operated by the weight control software system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more complete understanding of the method and apparatus of the present invention may be obtained by reference to the following Brief Description when

15   taken in conjunction with the accompanying Drawings wherein:

FIGURE 1 is an exemplary diagram illustrative of (i) the interaction between users and a provider of a weight control software system that provides the general rules and other elements of any weight control program via the weight control software system, and (ii) the interaction among (a) users, (b) an external source that provides

20   users with the general rules and other elements of any weight control program, and (c) the weight control software provider, in each case according to the principles of the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is an exemplary block diagram for operating a weight control software system for the weight control software provider and users of FIGURE 1;

25   FIGURE 3 is an exemplary block diagram that models the processes of the weight control software system of FIGURE 1 whereby the weight control software system utilizes personal information as input by a user to (i) customize the weight control software system, (ii) provide the user with individualized feedback and (iii) update the interactive software environment and underlying architecture in

30   accordance with the principles of the present invention;

FIGURE 4 is a more detailed exemplary block diagram of underlying architecture components of the weight control software system of FIGURE 3, including the modules and tools, to utilize personal user input to (i) customize the

weight control software system, (ii) provide individualized feedback, and (iii) update the interactive software environment and underlying architecture in accordance with the principles of the present invention;

FIGURE 5 is a more detailed exemplary block diagram of underlying architecture components of the weight control software system of FIGURE 3, including the modules and tools, to illustrate the interoperability and interconnection within the interactive software environment and underlying architecture;

FIGURE 6 is an exemplary flow diagram for providing interoperable elements to the user of the weight control software system of FIGURES 2-5 to personalize weight control data;

FIGURE 7 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the process whereby data from the food and exercise databases of the weight control software system of FIGURES 3 - 5 reside on the computing system of the user, providing the user with quicker and more seamless navigation of the journal of FIGURE 9;

FIGURE 8 is an exemplary graphical user interface (e.g., web page) showing one of the various areas of the weight control software system of FIGURES 2 - 5 whereby users input personal information;

FIGURE 9 is an exemplary web page of a journal illustrating the integration of foods from a food database into the journal consistent with the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 10 is an exemplary flow diagram illustrating the customization of the parameters of the journal of FIGURE 9 and meal plans of FIGURES 14 and 15 provided by the weight control software system based on a profile and food consumption goal for a user established by the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 11 is another exemplary web page of the journal of FIGURE 9 illustrating the integration of exercises from an exercise database of FIGURE 5 into the journal consistent with the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 12 is another exemplary web page of the journal of FIGURE 9 illustrating the integration of food from a food database of FIGURE 5 into the

journal consistent with the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 13 is another exemplary web page view of the journal of FIGURE 9 illustrating additional functionality in accordance with the principles of the present invention, including the integration of a searchable monthly calendar;

FIGURE 14 is an exemplary web page of a multiple-day meal plan generated by a meal planner module of FIGURE 5 and consistent with the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 15A is an exemplary web page showing a single day of a multiple-day meal plan of FIGURE 14;

FIGURE 15B is an exemplary web page illustrating the ability of the user to replace meals of FIGURE 15A with alternative meals generated by the meal planner module of FIGURE 5 and consistent with the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURES 16A and 16B are other exemplary web pages of the journal of FIGURE 9 illustrating the ability of the journal to evaluate, manage and display consumption goals and valuations for any food and exercise entered into the journal by the user according to the general rules of the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 17 is an exemplary web page illustrating the ability of the user to search for recipes according to food type, any food valuation established by the general rules of any weight control program or any other criteria and automatically place selected recipes directly into the journal of FIGURE 9;

FIGURE 18 is an exemplary set of instructions for using the recipe builder of FIGURE 5 to input and store recipes of the users and share such recipes with other users of the weight control software system of FIGURES 2-5;

FIGURE 19 is an exemplary web page of a weight tracker module of FIGURE 5 providing the user of the weight control software system with weight tracking capability and individualized feedback;

FIGURE 20 is an exemplary web page of the weight tracker of FIGURE 19 illustrating the ability of the weight control software system to generate a progress chart and integrate and interconnect the progress chart with specific days of the journal of FIGURE 9;

FIGURE 21 is an exemplary flow diagram for utilizing updated weight entered into the weight control software system of FIGURES 2-5 by the user to adjust the consumption goals, meal plans or any other aspect of the weight control software system according to the general rules of the weight control program of

5   FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 22 is an exemplary web page illustrating a panic button, whereby a user in need of immediate motivation can access a list of titles operating as hyperlinks to motivational information about the weight control program of FIGURE 1;

10   FIGURE 23 is an exemplary web page of the weight control software system of FIGURE 2 illustrating the ability of the user to generate public profile information and selectively make that information public;

FIGURE 24A is an exemplary web page illustrating the ability of the weight control software system of FIGURE 2 to store and display shared recipes

15   provided by other users of the weight control software system;

FIGURE 24B is an exemplary web page illustrating the ability of a user of the weight control software system of FIGURE 2 to input shared recipes and other criteria of FIGURE 24A; and

FIGURE 24C is an exemplary web page illustrating the ability of users of

20   the weight control software system of FIGURE 2 to search shared recipes provided by other users of the weight control software system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENTLY PREFERRED EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS

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I. OVERVIEW OF WEIGHT CONTROL SOFTWARE SYSTEM

FIGURE 1 is an exemplary diagram illustrative of (i) interaction between a weight control software provider 105 and users 110a-110b, (collectively 110), where the weight control software provider 105 provides the general rules and

30   other elements of any weight control program 115a-115n (collectively 115) via a weight control software system, and (ii) interaction among (a) users 110, (b) an external source that provides users with the general rules and other elements of the weight control program 115, and (c) the weight control software provider 105 that

provides the weight control software system, in each case according to the principles of the present invention. The weight control software system is accessed via the computing systems 125a or 125b (collectively 125) by the users 110a or 110b, respectively.

5   The weight control program 115 may be any dietary system or technique that allows the user 110 to lose, maintain, or gain body weight. The weight control program 115 may be designed and developed by any entity (including the user 110 him/herself) and may have different rules, guidelines and conventions. These general rules may be provided to the user 110 either directly by the weight control

10   software system via downloading over a network or through external sources, such as, but without limitation, books, tapes, lectures or CD-ROMs.

II. HARDWARE, SOFTWARE AND DATABASE STRUCTURE

FIGURE 2 is an exemplary block diagram 200 for operating a weight

15   control software system for the weight control software provider 105 and users 110 of FIGURE 1. The weight control software provider 105 utilizes a server 202 for managing and maintaining the weight control software system or a portion thereof (e.g., databases may be located externally from the server 202).

As is understood in the art, remote terminals 204a and 204b (collectively 204) are

20   operable by the weight control software provider 105 to interact with the server 202 to maintain the weight control software system. The server 202 includes a processor 206 coupled to a memory 208. The processor 206 is further coupled to an input/output (I/O) unit 210 and storage device 212. The storage device 212 may store one or more server database 214a-214n that include data associated with the

25   weight control software system provided by the weight control software provider 105. Server software 213 is operable to maintain and distribute data composed as datasets associated with individual users 110 of the weight control software system.

The server 202 is coupled to a network 216. The network 216 may be any network. The network 216, for example, may be the Internet, a satellite

30   communications network, a wireless or wired telecommunications network, local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), or any combination thereof. Additionally, the computing systems 125 utilized by the users 110 are coupled to the network 216. As shown, the computing system 125b includes a processor 220

operating software 221 coupled to a memory 222. The software 221 may include an interface (e.g., a web browser) as understood in the art and facilitate interface and execution with the server software 213 for the user 110 to utilize the weight control software system. The weight control software system may provide for a

5   weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) by storing rules of one or more weight control program 115 on the storage device 212. The weight control software system may thereafter read and logically follow the rules of the weight control program 115 as understood in the art. The processor 220 is further coupled to an I/O unit 224 (e.g., modem) and a storage device 226. The storage device 226 may

10   store user databases 228a-228n (collectively 228), where the user databases 228 may include data that is a subset of the server databases 214.

The computing system 125b further includes input control devices 230a and 230b, such as a keyboard and computer mouse, for operating the weight control software system. A display 232 is also coupled to the computing system 125b for

15   display of information provided by the weight control software system. While the computing systems 125 are shown as desktop computing systems, it should be understood that laptop, other configured computing systems, or terminals (e.g., interactive televisions) may be utilized. It should further be understood that handheld electronic devices, such as mobile wireless devices (e.g., mobile

20   telephones) and personal digital assistants (PDA), may be utilized by the users 110. In operation, the users 110 utilize the computing system 125 for executing and utilizing the weight control software system. As is understood in the art, the user 110 using the software 221 and associated hardware (e.g., I/O unit 224) may connect to the server 202 via the network 216. Data packets 234a and 234b

25   (collectively 234) are utilized to communicate data of the weight control software system across the network 216 from the server 202 to the computing systems 125 and vise versa. The server 202 may host a website that supports the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) and provide access to the user 110. The data communicated across the network 216 may include web pages and weight control

30   data stored in the server databases 214 to the computing systems 125 for storage or utilization thereby.

The web pages may be displayed on the display 232, and utilize the data stored in the user databases 228 to allow the user 110 to monitor and maintain the

weight control data associated with the weight control program 115. The network interaction between the user 110 and the weight control software provider 105 provides the users 110 with a means for interactively and dynamically adhering to the weight control program 115.

5   To provide the user 110 with a sense that the weight control software system operates faster and/or locally, data may be downloaded from the server 202 to the computing system 125. FIGURE 7 is an exemplary flow diagram 700 for providing the user 110 a sense that the weight control software system resides on the computing system 125b of the user 110. Generally, to provide the sense that
10   the weight control software system resides locally, weight control data associated with a user 110b from the server 202 is downloaded to the computing system 125b, updated by the user 110 while the user 110 is logged onto the weight control software system, and communicated back to the server 202 as updated at the end of the session. Alternatively, the weight control software system may be hosted by
15   the server 202.

           A consumer, non-network required version of the weight control software system may be provided to the computing system 125b of the user 110 via downloading across the network 216 or reading from a storage medium (e.g., compact disk). The non-network required version may operate independent of a
20   network connection. In one embodiment, a hand-held computing device 236 may communicate with the computing system 125b by a cradle 238 coupled via a wire 240 and may operate the weight control software system independent of or in communication with the network 216. The hand-held computing device may be a personal digital assistant, hand-held personal computer, wireless telephone, or
25   other electronic device capable of executing the weight control software system or a reduced version derived therefrom. The hand-held computing device 236 may be synchronized with the information from the computing system 125b as understood in the art. Accordingly, the hand-held computing device 236 may be capable of downloading data of the user 110, updating the data, and uploading the data for use
30   and/or storage and communication by the computing system 125b.

           Referring again to FIGURE 7, the process starts at step 702. At step 704, access to the server databases 214 or central repository is provided to the user 110. At step 706, a request for weight control data associated with the user 110 is

received. The request may be generated from the user 110 logging onto the weight control software system via the network 216. At step 708, weight control data is communicated to the user 110. The weight control data may be an entire dataset associated with the user 110 or simply a portion thereof. The weight control data

5   may include any data directly or indirectly associated with the user 110. The user 110 may work with the weight control software system to update the data that is temporarily located at the computing system 125b using cache memory or other storage unit. By allowing the user 110 to modify and update the data on the computing system 125b (without further accessing the server 202 during the login

10   session), the user 110 experiences a fast and efficient working environment such as would be experienced if the weight control software system were operating as a standalone or resides (e.g., compact disk based) on the computing system 125b. Upon completion of the session, the user logs-off of the weight control software system and the data may be communicated back to the server 202 via the network

15   216. At step 710, updated weight control data is received upon selective completion of use of the weight control software system by the user 110. The updated weight control data is stored at step 712, and the process ends at step 714.

III. USER PERSONALIZATION OF AND INTERACTION WITH THE

20   WEIGHT CONTROL SOFTWARE SYSTEM

FIGURES 3 and 4 are exemplary block diagrams that model the process, whereby the weight control software system utilizes personal data that is input by the user 110 to (i) customize the weight control software system, (ii) provide the

25   users 110 with individualized feedback, and/or (iii) update the interactive software environment and underlying architecture. The weight control software system manages personal data for a given user 110 that is stored on the server 202. As users 110 enter personal information into the user profiler 302 and subsequently update or include additional information in the weight control software system, the

30   user 110 individualizes the weight control software system and updates certain tools and modules of the weight control software system according to such personal information. The customized weight control software system further aids

in the control of body weight by providing feedback to users 110 based on their individual progress utilizing the applicable weight control program 115.

As shown in the block diagram 300 and as described in greater detail in the discussion of FIGURE 5 below, a number of components of the model representative of the operation of the weight control software system are configured in an inter-relational manner so as to provide the user 110 with personalization and feedback capabilities. As shown, a user profiler 302 is interconnected directly to a journal 304 and interconnected via a meal planner 306. The server databases 214 may be interconnected to both the journal 304 and meal planner 306 so as to more globally provide access to the data or information stored in the server databases 214. A weight tracker 310 is interconnected to the journal 304 and additionally interconnected to a targeted message generator 312. The targeted message generator 312 may further be interconnected to the user profiler 302. The user profiler 302, journal 304, meal planner 306, server databases 214, and weight tracker 310 may provide the user 110 with the capability of utilizing and maintaining data provided or pre-established by the weight control software provider 105 (FIGURE 1) and user-entered data.

Again referring to FIGURE 3, the weight control software system utilizes personal information entered by the user 110 to (i) customize the weight control software system, (ii) provide the users 110 with individualized feedback, and/or (iii) update the interactive software environment and underlying architecture. As shown, two feedback loops 318 and 320 are provided in the block diagram 300. Feedback loop 318 may be considered a periodic (e.g., daily) loop that is generated as the user 110 works with the journal 304. Alternatively, the feedback loop 318 may be considered event driven as the weight control software system is utilized by the user 110. The journal 304 provides a constant reminder and motivator for the user 110 to maintain, manage, and adhere to the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). In other words, the user 110 is provided daily feedback and reminders by simply working with the journal 304 and the information provided therein.

Although the journal 304 and meal planner 306 are shown to be coupled, the components of the weight control software system may be provided to the user 110 by the weight control software system individually and independently. By

allowing the components to operate individually and independently, the user 110 may be provided a more limited scope of functionality, but have suitable functionality for the purposes desired by the user 110.

Feedback loop 320 may be considered a periodic or aperiodic feedback loop that is

5   formed by the user 110 performing a weigh-in, where the weigh-in measures the current or updated weight 322 of the user 110. The updated weight 322 may be supplied by the user 110 to the weight tracker 310, which utilizes the updated weight 322 to determine the progress of the user 110.

FIGURE 6 is an exemplary flow diagram 600 for providing interoperable

10   elements to the user 110 of the weight control software system to personalize data. An interface for the user 110 to the weight control system may be a graphical user interface, such as a website. The process starts at step 602. At step 604, the initial profile of the user 110 is received. At step 606, a dataset (i.e., weight control data) based on the initial profile of the user 110 is formed. The dataset may include a

15   predetermined meal plan (e.g., list of meals) and other weight control data. Interoperable weight control elements are provided to the user 110 to personalize the dataset for the user 110. The interoperable weight control elements may include hyperlinks, buttons, text boxes, radio buttons, and/or any other user-selectable software interface element as understood in the art. At step 610, data

20   associated with the weight control elements is received.

At step 612, the dataset may be updated in accordance with the received data. The dataset is stored at step 614, and the process ends at step 616. It should be understood that while the user-selectable software elements provided to the user 110 via a web page, for example, are interoperable (i.e., data entered in association

25   with one software element may be accessed by other software elements), the underlying architecture of FIGURES 3-5 provides the interoperability therefor. Such interoperability and interconnection is described in detail in Section IV below.

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IV. INTEROPERABILTIY AND INTERCONNECTION OF THE WEIGHT CONTROL SOFTWARE SYSTEM

FIGURE 4 is a more detailed exemplary block diagram 400 of underlying
5   architecture components of the weight control software system of FIGURE 3. As
shown, the components (e.g., journal, databases, meal planner) of the weight
control software system are modular and interoperable. In other words, the
information provided to one of the components is accessible to each of the other
components.

10   The server databases 214 have been expanded to show a number of
different databases, including food 402, recipes 404, meals 406 and exercises or
activities 408. Each of these databases may include pre-established data provided
by the weight control product provider 105 (FIGURE 1) and user-entered data
provided by the user 110. The food database 402 may include food served by
15   restaurants, such as McDonald's® and other brand name restaurants and food
products. In addition to the targeted message generator 312, the user 110 is able to
utilize a progress chart generator 410 to monitor parameters and/or performance
indicators that are indicative of the progress of the user 110 in following the weight
control program. For example, the progress chart generator 410 may receive
20   updated weights from the weight tracker 310 and display the updated weights over
a period of time so that the user 110 can monitor weight loss, for example. By
graphically monitoring or feeding-back weight loss progress, the user 110 may find
additional motivation. The graphical representation may additionally allow the
user 110 to identify successful periods (e.g., weeks) of weight loss so that the user
25   110 may review the journal 304 to determine what meals made those periods
successful.

Two additional components that are included in the more detailed block
diagram 400 of the weight control software system are a search engine 412 and a
favorites generator 414. The search engine 412 allows the user 110 to search the
30   server databases 214 for particular words and/or food values. The search engine
412 may be more comprehensive and allow the user 110 to search for types of
foods, courses, or any other information that may be stored in the server databases
214 as understood in the art. The favorites generator 414 allows the user 110 to

identify and categorize individual foods, meals, recipes, and/or exercises that the user 110 often uses. By including both of these components, the user 110 is able to save time in utilizing the weight control software system. Additionally, the user 110 is able to further customize the weight control software system according to personal desires.

The weight control software system possesses a high level of interoperability and interconnection within the interactive software environment and underlying architecture (including the modules and tools) such that user input in one module or tool may update other modules and tools for increased user efficiency and personalization.

FIGURE 5 is a detailed exemplary block diagram 500 illustrating such interoperability and interconnection. As shown, the journal 304 is centered among and interrelated with the other components of the weight control software system. While the block diagram 500 appears to be complex in the interrelationships between the components, it should be understood that this complexity is of the underlying architecture and not of the user interface. By having such a complex underlying architecture, the user interface and weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) are able to be simplified for operation thereof.

A number of additional components have been included in the block diagram 500 that were not present in FIGURES 3 and 4. These components include a recipe builder 502, rules database 504, express foods 508 and community module 512.

The recipe builder 502 is a tool that allows the user 110 to generate user-defined foods and recipes that may be stored in the foods database 403, entered into the journal 304, and saved in the favorites generator 414 for later use. Additionally, the recipe builder 502 may be utilized to share the recipe with others utilizing the weight control software system using, for example, public forums such as chat rooms, message boards, bulletin boards, or similar locations or activities where users 110 may communicate with one another (community). The recipe builder 502 provides the user 110 with an easy way to add and search for ingredients of a recipe. Once the ingredients are entered by the user 110, the recipe builder 502 is able to apply the general rules of the weight control program to

provide the user 110 with information and guidance on what quantity of such food or meal is appropriate to accomplish the weight control goals of the user 110.

The rules database 504 is a database of the general rules for the weight control program 115. The representation of the rules database 504 in FIGURE 5 as a separate "module" is for illustrative purposes only since such rules are expressed and manifested in the functionality of other, if not all, aspects of the weight control software system. FIGURE 5 illustrates how the rules database 504 impacts and influences such tools and modules as the journal 304 and weight tracker 310.

The express foods 508 is a database that stores and maintains food information expressly defined by the user 110 in operating the weight control software system. If the user 110 cannot find a food by searching the food database 402, the express foods database 508 provides the user 110 with the means to input foods into the journal 304 and store such personal, customized foods.

Other components, such as a shopping list generator (not shown), may be integrated into the weight control software system to provide additional functionality to the system. In the case of a shopping list generator, the weight control program established for the user 110 may be utilized to determine the ingredients and generate a shopping list for the user 110 to print and/or electronically communicate to a grocery store or grocery delivery service. Accordingly, the added components are interoperable with existing components.

The following tools and modules of the weight control software system may be interoperable and interconnected, directly or indirectly, as generally set forth below:

The user profile 302 may be interconnected with the community module 512 so that the weight control software system may allow the user 110 to create a public profile that displays to other users 110 of the weight control software system certain personal information about such user 110.

The user profile 302 may interconnected with the meal planner 306 so that the weight control software system may provide the user 110 with customized meal plans according to, for example, the dietary preferences of the user 110 and the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1).

The user profile 302 may be interconnected with the journal 304 so that the user 110 may customize the journal 304 according to his or her personal preferences and the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1).

The weight tracker 310 may be interconnected with the progress chart
5   generator 410 so that the weight control software system may provide the user 110 with a graphical chart illustrating the progress of the user 110 with respect to the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1).

The weight tracker 310 may be interconnected with the exercise database 408 so that the weight control software system may provide the user 110 with
10   personal, customized exercises based on the weight of the user 110 and the general rules of the weight control program 115.

The weight tracker 310 may be interconnected with the targeted message generator 312 so that the weight control software system may provide the user 110 with instantaneous feedback in the form of targeted messages based on the updated
15   weight of the user 110.

The weight tracker 310 may be interconnected with the rules database 504 so that the weight control software system may analyze the data entered into the weight tracker 310 in accordance with the general rules of the weight control program 115.

20   The rules database 504 may be interconnected with the meal planner 306 so that the weight control software system may provide the user 110 with customized meal plans according to weight of the user 110 and the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1).

The rules database 504 may be interconnected with the journal 304 so that
25   the journal 304 may operate and function within the general rules of the weight control program.

The exercises 408, foods 402, recipes 404, and meals 406 databases may be interconnected with the search engine 412 so that the weight control software system may provide the user 110 with search capabilities within the databases for
30   exercises, foods, recipes and meals.

The search engine 412 may be interconnected with the journal 304 so that the user 110 may input and store search results obtained from databases with respect to exercises 408, foods 402, recipes 404 and meals 406 into the journal 304.

The foods database 402 may be interconnected with the journal 304 so that the user 110 may input and store foods in the journal 304 obtained from the foods database 402.

The express foods 508 may be interconnected with the journal 304 so that the user 110 may create, input and store personal, customized foods not found in the foods database 402 into the journal 304 and the favorites generator 414.

The favorites generator 414 may be interconnected with the journal 304 so that the user 110 may store as a favorite any exercises 408, foods 402, recipes 404, express foods 508, or meals 406 into the journal 304 for quick and simplified access when using the journal 304 in the future.

The foods database 402 may be interconnected with the recipe builder 502 so that the user 110 may create personal recipes using foods stored in the foods database 402.

The recipe builder 502 may be interconnected with the foods database 402 so that the user 110 may create personal, customized foods using the recipe builder 502 and store them in the foods database 402.

The favorites generator 414 may be interconnected with the recipe builder 502 so that the user 110 may store as a favorite any personal recipes created by the user 110 in the recipe builder 502 into the journal 304 for quick and simplified access when using the journal 304 in the future.

V. DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF CERTAIN TOOL AND MODULE FUNCTIONALITY.

PROFILER

In operation, with regard to FIGURE 3, the user 110 initializes or establishes an account at 314 utilizing the user profiler 302. The user profiler 302 is operable to receive user information as shown in TABLE 1, which may include such criteria as weight, height, body fat, gender, and age, for example. Other criteria additionally may be utilized in generating a meal plan for the user 110 according to the general rules of the weight control program 115.

Name
Gender
Weight
Height
Birthdate
Address
Phone Number
Profession
Marital Status
Other Characteristics (e.g., body type, personality)
Other Demographical Information (e.g., race, nationality)
Medical Information (e.g., pre-existing diseases)
Payment Information

TABLE 1 - Exemplary Initial Settings Provided by the User

The profile data includes enough information to allow the weight control software system to establish settings in the journal 304 and develop the meal plan or list of meals for the user 110 with the meal planner 306 according to the general

5   rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1).

Referring now to FIGURE 8, an exemplary graphical user interface (GUI) (e.g., web page) 800 is provided showing summary information for a personal profile of the user 110 and operated by the user profiler 302. The GUI 800 illustrates how the weight control software system collects personal information of

10   the user 110. The personal profile information includes primary personal information 810, such as current weight, height, gender, and birthdate. Personal information, including name, address, phone number, e-mail address, profession, marital status, and identification number, may further be requested from the user 110 so as to provide the weight control software provider 105 (FIGURE 1) general

15   contact and related information. Other characteristics, such as attitude, athleticism,

eye color, hair color, and weight goals may be requested of the user 110. The other characteristics may be useful in establishing a psychological profile to assist in the weight control efforts. Other demographic information 814 may include race, religion, ethnicity, and blood type, for example, so as to allow the weight control

5   software provider 105 (FIGURE 1), to be sensitive to the needs, customs, etc. of the user 110.

Determination of health restrictions 816 may also be of value to the weight control software provider 105 (FIGURE 1). The health restrictions may include current diseases and existing or previous physical injuries. Such restrictions may

10   include diabetes, cancer, mental illness, HIV, nursing mothers, and other health restrictions that may impact the application of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1).

The weight control software provider 105 (FIGURE 1) may further request a desired meal plan type 818. The desired meal plan types may include regular,

15   higher-carbohydrate, higher-protein, and vegetarian. Each of these meal plan types has an associated percentage of carbohydrates, protein, fat, and fruits and vegetables that the user 110 is prescribed to eat in the daily food consumption regiment. TABLE 2 provides an exemplary food consumption daily regiment as prescribed by the desired meal plan types.

20

	Average Nutrient Mix Per Day			Servings Per Day
Type of Plan	Carbs	Protein	Fat	Fruit and Veg
Regular	55%	20%	25%	5+
Higher-carbohydrate	60%	20%	20%	5+
Higher-protein	50%	25%	25%	5+
Vegetarian	55%	20%	25%	5+

TABLE 2 - Desired Meal Plan Types

Depending upon the weight-tracking day or other measurement day designated by the weight loss program, the user 110 may enter that day into the

weight control software system. The weight-tracking day is utilized by the weight control software system to establish the first day of the week for the calendar of the user 110. Alternatively, the calendar may not be aligned with a weight-tracking day and the user 110 may or may not periodically perform a weight-tracking. If a

5   weigh-in day is utilized, the journal may be calibrated such that the user 110 may more easily utilize the calendar.

Continuing with the discussion of FIGURE 8, the weight control software provider 105 may further request payment information 822 so that an electronic payment may occur on a regular basis from the user 110 to the weight control

10   software provider 105 (FIGURE 1). The payment information 822 may include credit card information, debit card information, or other account information such that the electronic transaction may occur without further intervention by the user 110. A total subscription charge 824 may be calculated based on monthly charges for different services provided by the weight control software provider 105 for the

15   users 110.

Upon completion of entering the initial personal profile, the weight control software system is able to set the food consumption parameters in the journal 304 and develop a meal plan via the meal planner 306 personalized for the user 110 as a function of the information provided in the personal profile. For example, the body

20   mass index of the user 110 may be calculated based on the height and weight of the user 110.

In providing the user 110 with the ability to easily navigate the website, the site navigational elements 806 are utilized to allow the user 110 to rapidly access different topics on the website. The topics include home (i.e., home page of the

25   user 110), the plan, community, success stories, food and recipes, healthy life, fitness, just for me, and shop. Each of these topics may provide the user 110 with information about the weight control program and the ability to manage personal data.

Within each web page selected from the site navigational elements 806,

30   page navigational elements 808 are provided. The page navigational elements 808 may include journal, weight tracker, progress charts, my favorites, and assessment, for example, for "the plan" site navigational element. Other site navigational elements may have different page navigational elements 808. As shown, "the

plan" is selected by the user and the personal profile is displayed on the website. A panic button 826 is provided on each page of the website to enable the user 110 to access "panic" type of information (see FIGURE 22) in times of trouble or crises during the weight control process.

JOURNAL

Referring again to FIGURE 3, the journal 304 operates as a blank piece of virtual paper that the user 110 personalizes by recording food and exercise consumption in performing the personal data management, and enables the weight control software system to provide feedback as to when the user 110 is adhering to the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). The journal 304 provides the user 110 with access to a calendar (not shown) that lists the meals and/or foods eaten for each present and/or past day. Meal plans generated by the meal planner 306 may also may be automatically and/or semi-automatically posted to the journal 304.

Referring again to FIGURE 5, the user 110 may enter food and exercise into the journal 304 by searching the server databases 214 via the search engine 412. The search engine 412 allows the user 110 to search the server databases 214 for particular words and/or food metrics based on the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). The search engine 412 may be more comprehensive and allow the user 110 to search for types of foods, courses, or any other information that may be stored in the server databases 214 as understood in the art.

Any food or exercise entered into the journal 304 by the user 110 may be saved by the server databases 214 as a separate user-customized and defined "favorites" category. The favorites generator 414 allows the user 110 to identify and categorize individual foods, meals, recipes, and/or exercises that the user 110 often uses, thus allowing the user 110 to save time while utilizing the weight control software system.

Referring now to FIGURE 9, an exemplary web page 900a of the weight control software system operating the journal 304 on the computing system 125b is provided. As indicated, "my plan" 806b of the site navigational elements 806 is selected. Additionally, the "Journal" 808a of the page navigational elements 808 is selected. Again, the journal 304 allows the user 110 to post and record consumed

foods in a calendar format established in conjunction with the weight control program 115 supported by the weight control software system. And, the meals and/or foods consumed by the user 110 may be stored by the journal 304 for future reference purposes by the user 110 or weight control software system.

5   Four functional elements 904a-904d (collectively 904) may be selected in working with the journal 304. A food consumption section 906 presents meals for each part of the day. For example, the morning portion 908 shows a meal having one medium pear, one cup of artificially sweetened yogurt, one-half cup of General Mills Whole Grain Total□, and six average almonds. Each food item 910 has an

10   associated food value 912 as determined by the general rules of the illustrated weight control program 115, for example. However, foods may be categorized in any other way, such as calories or grades, based on the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). In one embodiment, the food values may be determined and tallied in terms of "POINTS" as specified by a particular weight

15   control program 115. POINTS is a registered trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc. See, US Patent Numbers 6,040,531 and 6,436,036 to Miller-Kovach et al. for further discussion of POINTS. A subtotal and daily total for each meal is provided in the food consumption section 906. The user 110 is able to tailor the foods for the day by selecting and unselecting food items 910 in the food

20   consumption section 906 based on the general rules of the weight control program 115.

          To alter the food items 910, the user 110 may add and delete food items. For example, the user 110 may delete the six average almonds by selecting a check box 916 associated with the six average almonds. A "delete checked items" soft-

25   button 918 may be selected to delete the food items having checked boxes 116 selected.

          Continuing with FIGURE 4, to add a food item, the "Add Food" functional element 904a may be selected. The user 110 may then select via soft-radio buttons 920, a meal time for which to add food. The user 110 may then perform a search

30   of the foods database 402, select a favorite meal, or add a food item via an "express" data entry technique. Once a food is selected or entered, the user 110 may add the food to the food consumption section 906 by selecting an "add" soft-

button. The food is then automatically placed into the food consumption section 906.

The journal 304 is highly interoperable with other functions and features of the weight control software system. As shown, the site informational elements 802, site navigational elements 806, and page navigational elements 808 are available for the user 110 to select for rapid movement within the website. Upon selecting one of the elements 802, 806, or 808, the information entered into the journal 304 is instantly accessible at other locations within the website. Again, this interoperability and interconnection between the elements is provided by way of the underlying architecture of the components in FIGURE 5.

FIGURE 11 is another exemplary web page 900b of the journal of FIGURE 9. The "Add Exercise" functional element 904b is selected so as to provide the user 110 with the ability to add exercises to an exercise section 1102 of the food consumption section 906. As shown, the exercise section 1102 includes one established exercise (i.e., "thirty min walking, leisure"). Generally, weight control software system functions so that exercise is used to offset food consumed so as to factor into the total amount of recommended food that the user 110 may consume in a given day. However, it should be understood that other general rules that factor into the total amount of recommended food provided by the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) may be integrated into the weight control software system.

Other exercises may be added to the exercise section 1102 by searching the exercise database 408, searching the favorites from the favorites generator 414, or adding a personal, customized exercise. As shown, the term "weight lifting" may be entered into a search text box 1104. Upon selecting a "find" soft-button 1106, the user 110 may find and select a weight lifting exercise and add it to the exercise section 1102. By adding exercises, the user 110 may have control and flexibility over the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) as established by the weight control software system.

FIGURE 12 is yet another exemplary web page 900c of the journal 304 of FIGURE 9. The food consumption section 906 illustrates the flexibility of the journal 304 according to the principles of the present invention. As shown, only portions of two meals (i.e., morning and midday) have been established by the user

110 via the meal planner 306 or by entering the foods in manually. As shown, the morning meal currently includes bacon and eggs, and the midday meal includes beef steak and fruit salad. As is understood by the user 110 of the weight control software system, liquids, such as orange juice and soda, may further be added to the morning and midday meals. The evening meal has yet to be established, but may easily be entered by searching the database, selecting a favorite food and/or meal, and/or expressing a food based on the general rules of the weight control program 115, so as to be entered into the food consumption section 906. Accordingly, the foods may be entered and tallied to notify the user 110 whether the amount of food consumed is within the recommended consumption range 914 according to the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). In one embodiment, the recommended consumption range 914 may be a function of calories. Alternatively and/or additionally, the recommended consumption range 914 may be a function of fat and fiber. Upon the food and exercises being consumed and performed, respectively, the journal 304 stores the items for future review.

A suggested food items section 1202 is provided beneath the food consumption section 906 and exercise section 1102 to provide for a balanced diet. The suggested food items section 1202 is generally consistent with the desired meal plan type 818 selected by the user 110 in the personal profile 302 and the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). To select a particular suggested food item, icons, such as water cups 1204, tomatoes 1206 (representing fruits and vegetables), multi-vitamins and milk cartons (representing dairy products) are provided. As the user 110 consumes the food items, the user 110 records consumption by selectively "clicking" on the associated icon.

FIGURE 13 is yet another exemplary web page 900d of the journal 304 of FIGURE 9. This view shows that the "Calendar" functional element 904d is selected. As shown, a calendar 1302 is provided for the user 110 to select individual days of a month. In this case, January 16, 2002 has been selected. The foods for the day are shown in the food consumption section 906 so that the user 110 may follow and/or alter the foods as desired. Accordingly, an alterable meal plan schedule or time-based plan is generated by the foods being selected in advance for the user 110 to consume.

FIGURE 16A depicts an exemplary web page 900e of the journal 304 of FIGURE 9 providing a tally for an individual day of the food and exercise for the user 110. As shown by example, the illustrated weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) has assigned a recommended food consumption target of twenty-
5   seven (27). Based on the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1), the user 110 has consumed an amount of food (based on quantity and food type) equal to 28 and has exercised (based on type and duration) in an amount equal to four (4). The general rules of the illustrative weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) also allow the user 110 to consume an additional amount of food
10   equal to three (3) that the user 110 was permitted but did not eat on a prior day. The additional amount of food for consumption is computed in the following manner: 28 food values of consumption minus 4 activity values = 24, so that 27 target values minus 24 = 3 additional food values available for consumption. It should be understood that the general rules are established by the weight control
15   program 115, and that other rules may be utilized to produce or enhance the same or similar functionality for providing a weight control program 115 for the user 110.

FIGURE 16B is another exemplary webpage 900f of the journal of FIGURE 9 providing the user 110 with the ability to accept the tally of food and
20   activity values. As shown, the tally shows that the value for the available amount of food to consume is three (3) and a selection tool (i.e., pull-down menu) 1602 is available to alter that value by the user 110. Once the user 110 is ready to store the selected value, up to a maximum value established by the tally for the day, the user 110 may select a soft-button 1604a or 1604b to reject or accept the selected value.
25   Upon the user 110 selecting soft-button 1604b indicating that the user is ready to store a value of three (3), the webpage 900f is updated such that the banked value may be shown in the meal plan points information 914 (see FIGURE 16A).

MEAL PLANNER
30   In addition to individual foods, recipes and exercises, the user 110 may access through the meal planner 306 certain predetermined meal plans developed in accordance with the general rules of the weight control program and stored on the server databases 214. The meal planner 306 determines meals for each user 110 in

accordance with the personal profile of the user 110 and the general rules of any weight control program 115.

If the user 110 does not want to use a meal provided by the meal planner 306, the user 110 may replace this meal with an alternative meal generated by the meal planner 306 and consistent with the general rules of the weight control program 115. The user 110 may input any meal generated by the meal planner 306 into the journal 304 and save the meal in the favorites category of the user 110. Furthermore, as the weight tracker 310 is updated by the updated weight 322 as input by the user 110, the meal planner 306 automatically alters the dietary recommendations of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1) based on the updated weight 322 in accordance with the general rules of the weight control program 115. By altering the dietary recommendations of the weight control program 115, the recommended quantity and type of food is altered such that both the journal 304 settings and the meals provided to the user 110 via the meal planner 306 are automatically updated.

As discussed in detail with regard to FIGURE 10 hereinafter, there are generally two types of weight control users 110, (i) structured and (ii) non-structured users. The structured users typically want to know specific meals to eat that follow the general rules of the weight control program 115. To provide for the structured users, the meal planner 306 predetermines the meals for the user 110 that meet the rules of the weight control program 115. The journal 304 allows the user 110 to enter the meals generated by the meal planner 306 and consumed by the user 110 as a daily record. Accordingly, the meal planner 306 is coupled to the journal 304. The user 110 may alter the planned meals by substituting the planned meals with other meals suggested by the meal planner 306. By allowing the user 110 to choose between creating a customized meal by selecting and entering foods into the journal 304 or selecting a meal created by the meal planner 306, the weight control software system may accommodate both structured and non-structured user types.

FIGURE 10 is an exemplary flow diagram 1000 illustrating the customization of the parameters of the journal of FIGURE 9 and meal plans of FIGURES 14 and 15 provided by the weight control software system based on a profile and food consumption goal of a user established by the general rules of the

weight control program of FIGURE 1. The process starts at step 1002. At step 1004, an initial personal profile including characteristics of a user 110 is received. At step 1005, rules, conventions and guidelines of the weight control program 115 are applied or established by the weight control software system. A daily food consumption goal for the user 110, which is based on the personal information of the user 110 and the general rules of the weight control program 115, is established at step 1006.

At step 1007, a determination may be made as to whether the user 110 is a structured or unstructured user 110. In other words, it is determined whether the user 110 wants a meal plan automatically created or the user 110 wants to create the meal plan. The determination may be made by the user selecting a control element, such as a soft-button, or by inspecting the profile of the user 110.

If it is determined that the user 110 is a structured user, then at step 1008, the weight control software system sets parameters in the journal 304 and creates meals (i.e., a list of meals or meal plan) generated by the meal planner 306, in each case, in accordance with the personal information of the user 110 and the general rules of the weight control program 115. At step 1010, the meal plan is provided to the user 110. The process ends at step 1012.

If it is determined that the user 110 is not a structured user, then at step 1014, journal parameters are set based on the food consumption goal as determined by the weight control software system based on the weight control program 115. At step 1016, the weight control software system provides the user with the ability to search databases for user-created meals. At step 1018, the user 110 may form the meal plan by (i) searching the food database 402, favorites generator 414, or entering express foods 508, (ii) a meal generated by the meal planner 306, or (iii) a combination of both. The user 110 may enter the meals into the journal 304. The process ends at step 1012.

FIGURE 14 is an exemplary seven day meal plan 1400 provided on a web page as generated by the meal planner 306 of the weight control software system and consistent with the general rules of the weight control program 115. As shown, "food and recipes" site navigational element 806e is selected to provide the user 110 with the food and recipe portion of the website. Additionally, the "Meal Plans" page navigational elements 808c is selected such that the seven day meal

plan is provided to the user 110. The seven day meal plan begins on Wednesday, which may correspond to the weight-tracking day established by the user 110 in the initial profile of the user 110 as entered in the GUI 800.

The seven day meal plan 1400 may include both the names of meals and any classification associated with meals based on the general rules of the weight control program 115. For example, on Wednesday, the morning meal is "cheese omelet", midday meal is a "veggie chili", evening meal is an "apricot turkey breast", and snack is "snacks and treats". The cheese omelet has been deselected by the user selecting or clicking on the check box 1402 utilizing the input control device 230b. The deselection indicates that the user 110 has not consumed the cheese omelet so that the cheese omelet is not posted to the journal 304.

In the web page of the seven day meal plan 1400, a tools section 1404 is provided to allow the user 110 to select soft-buttons associated with a number of tools, including journal, weight tracker, meal plans, food calculator, recipe search, and recipe builder. These tools provide interoperability with the web page of the meal planner 306. In other words, tools other than the one being utilized may be selected via soft-buttons and the functional operation of one tool may affect the information to be utilized by another tool. It should be understood that the tools section 1404 includes an exemplary list of tools and that others or alternatives may be included.

FIGURE 15A is an exemplary web page 1500a showing a single day of the seven day meal plan 1400 of FIGURE 14. The single day may be selected by selecting a hyperlink (e.g., Wednesday) on the seven day meal plan 1400. As shown, each of the meals, including morning, midday, evening, and snack, are provided for the user to select and deselect to enable automatic posting to the journal 304. A pull-down menu tool 1502 as understood in the art is provided for the user 110 to swap the present morning meal for a different meal. Swapping of the meal is relatively straightforward as the weight control software system is interactive and interoperable. In other words, in swapping a meal, another web page may be generated that allows the user 110 to link with the server databases 214 and to select a different meal to replace an existing one.

Upon updating the meal plan, the user 110 may select a soft-button 1504 to update the meal plan. Accordingly, upon the meal plan being updated, each other

page of the weight control software system includes access to the information that has been updated.

Again, as discussed with respect to FIGURE 7, to provide the user with a faster interface, the data updated during the course of a session (i.e., while the user

5   is logged onto the weight control software system) is maintained, thereby not requiring the computing system 125b to communicate over the network 216 with the server 202 during the session. Upon the user logging off of the weight control software system, the data updated during the session may be uploaded to the server 202 to be stored in the server databases 214 on the storage device 212.

10 FIGURE 15B is a page 1500b that provides the ability for the user 110 to swap meals provided in the web page of FIGURE 15A. As shown, the user 110 has selected the morning meal (i.e., cheese omelet) to swap. A pull-down menu element 1506 provides the user 110 with a variety of meals to select from in order to replace the morning meal. The user 110 may simply highlight one of the meals,

15 such as "Yogurt Topped Fruit", and the morning meal is swapped.

WEIGHT TRACKER

The weight tracker 310 utilizes the general rules of the weight control program 115 to maintain the information of the user 110. The weight tracker 310

20 is operable to automatically alter the recommended amount or type of food a user 110 should consume based on the updated weight 322 into the weight tracker 310 and the general rules of the weight control program 115. In addition, the meals provided to the user 110 via the meal planner 306 are automatically altered. The user profiler 302 may also be updated with the updated weight 322.

25 As the user 110 loses weight, the weight tracker 310 may reduce the amount or type of food that the user 110 is recommended to consume because as the user 110 loses weight, fewer nutrients are required by the user 110. The recommendation may be based on a body mass index (BMI), cholesterol levels, body fat measurements, etc., and lowered using a linear or non-linear technique. It

30 should be understood that the weight control program 115 may additionally be utilized to assist a user 110 in gaining weight. In the case of gaining weight, the recommended amount or type of food may be set higher such that the weight control program 115 operates to increase the body mass index of the user 110.

FIGURE 21 is an exemplary flow diagram for utilizing the updated weight 322 and adjusting the weight control software system consistent with the weight control program 115. The process starts at step 2102. At step 2104, initial body weight of the person (i.e., user 110) is received. At step 2106, at least one other

5   characteristic of the person is received. A target food consumption plan is determined for the person based on the initial weight and characteristics of the person. The target food consumption plan may be a predetermined amount of food to consume based on food values associated with food items, where the food values may be a function of ingredients and/or nutritional value (e.g., fat, calories, and

10 fiber). After establishment of the target food consumption plan, the updated weight 322 of the user 110 is received by the weight tracker 310 at step 2110. Based on the updated weight 322 of the user 110, the target food consumption plan is automatically altered at step 2112.

The automatic altering of the target food consumption plan is based on the

15 rules of the weight control program 115 and may be utilized to adjust the recommended amount or type of food for a particular day, which ultimately alters the target food consumption plan for any particular day based on such recommendation. By automatically altering the target food consumption plan, the user 110 may simply focus on adhering to the weight control program 115. The

20 process repeats steps 2110 and 2112 until the user 110 ultimately foregoes the weight control program 115, if ever, where the process ends at step 2114.

The general rules of the weight control program 115 may range from simple to complex and may be based on any number of criteria, such as food items, calories, nutrients, weight measurements, and exercise levels. In one embodiment,

25 the rules of the weight control program 115 prescribe that the user 110 is to lose not more than a maximum number of pounds over a certain amount of time. As understood in the art, by maintaining a steady loss of weight, the user 110 is provided a safe way to lose weight. Other rules may be applied for safety or medical reasons as established for a specific user based on the profile or otherwise.

30 FIGURE 19 is exemplary web page for providing weight tracking capability using the weight tracker 310. As the user 110 continues on with following the weight control program 115 provided by the weight control software system, the user 110 may continue to follow a more regimented version of the

weight control program 115. Body weight of the user 110 may be measured on a periodic or aperiodic basis and enter the updated weight 322 using the weight tracker 310 function by selecting "Weight Tracker" page navigational element 808b under the "my plan" site navigational element 806b. After the updated

5   weight 322 is entered, it is shown in the current information section 1902 to provide feedback to the user 110. As shown, the weight tracker 310 is interoperable with other elements and functions of the weight control software system. Accordingly, as shown and discussed with regard to FIGURE 3, the weight tracker 310 is utilized to receive user input (i.e., updated weight 322) and

10   that the weight control software system may adjust the user profile 302 and meal plan accordingly as the weight of the changes.

Upon or after entry of the updated weight 322, a targeted message may be delivered by the targeted message generator 312 in an instantaneous or real-time, or substantially real-time fashion such that the user 110 is provided feedback based on

15   the updated weight 322. The feedback in the form of the targeted message may be instantaneous. Alternatively the targeted message may be delayed. The targeted message generator 312 may issue an instant message, e-mail, and/or customized web page, for example. The targeted message may include a congratulatory statement, encouragement statement, motivational statement, or other statement or

20   content made to the user 110 based on the updated weight 322. In other words, if the user 110 loses weight from the previous week, then the targeted message generator 312 may congratulate the user on his or her accomplishment.

Since the loss of a few pounds for one individual may be relatively insignificant relative to his or her ultimate weight goal, the targeted message may

25   be adjusted based on the goals set by the user 110. By providing instantaneous feedback to the user 110, instant gratification or satisfaction may be provided to the user 110 to help encourage and motivate the user 110 to maintain use of the weight control program 115 and use the weight control software system. The targeted message may also provide a warning if the user is losing weight too quickly. In

30   addition, the targeted message may be tailored to the perceived success or failure of the user 110 with his or her weight loss by asking the user 110 questions about his or her weight loss or gain prior to delivering the targeted message. The targeted

message may be just what the user 110 needs to provide that added recognition to maintain a healthy attitude on the journey to his or her ultimate weight goal.

RECIPE SEARCH

5   FIGURE 17 is an exemplary web page 1700 for providing the user 110 with the ability to search for recipes. As shown, the user 110 is provided with search information entry elements 1702 for performing a keyword search within certain parameters consistent with the rules of the weight control program 115. As shown, an exemplary search for keyword "chicken" within the parameters of 5 to 7 (based

10   on the general rules of the illustrative weight control program 115) has been performed. Any recipe that has the term chicken and is within a range of 5 to 7 is provided by the weight control software system for the user 110 to view. Additionally, an indication as to which course and how much time the recipe takes to prepare is provided. These recipes may be selected and entered into the journal

15   304 or saved as favorites as provided by the weight control software system. It should be understood that the recipes that may be searched are found in the server databases 214, where the recipes include pre-established recipes from the weight control program 115 or recipes of the user 110. Additionally, the search may include a recipe listing from a community database that includes recipes from other

20   users 110.

RECIPE BUILDER

          FIGURE 18 is an exemplary set of instructions 1800 for using the recipe builder 502 to generate recipes as preferred by the user 110. The recipe builder

25   502 allows the user 110 to create recipes using food items that may be found in the food database 402 or items entered manually by the user 110. As shown, there are three primary steps to building a recipe. The process starts at step 1802. At step 1804, the user 110 enters a recipe title, number of servings, and course to which the recipe applies. At step 1806, individual ingredients of the recipe are entered. To

30   add the individual ingredients, a text field is provided for the user 110 to enter an ingredient. The ingredient may be general, such as "bread", and a search may be performed for any ingredient including the term "bread" or other substantially related term. Upon finding a particular bread ingredient, such as whole, wheat, or

white, the user may select the ingredient and continue adding ingredients for the recipe.

At the end of entering the ingredients for the recipe, recipe instructions may be entered at step 1808. The recipe instructions may be entered into a text box 1810 so that the user 110 or others users of the weight control software system may follow the instructions for preparing the recipe. The recipe may be submitted by selecting a soft-button 1812. Upon submission, the recipe database 404 may be updated on the user computing system 125b and, upon logging out of the weight control software system, updated on the server 202. The process ends at step 1814. The recipe may thereafter be edited, deleted, or searched for using other elements within the weight control software system.

PROGRESS CHARTS

The weight tracker 310 updates the progress chart generator 410 to monitor parameters and/or performance indicators that are indicative of the progress of the user 110 in following the weight control program 115. For example, the progress chart generator 410 may receive updated weights 322 from the weight tracker 310 and display the updated weights over a period of time so that the user 110 can monitor weight loss or gain, for example. By graphically monitoring or feeding-back weight loss progress, the user 110 may be additionally motivated. The graphical representation may additionally allow the user 110 to identify successful weeks of weight loss so that the user 110 may review the journal 304 to determine what meals made those weeks successful.

FIGURE 20 is an exemplary web page 2000 providing a progress chart 2002 that is generated by the weight tracker 310. The progress chart 2002 is a line graph that shows weight per date. Each week or the period that the user 110 weighs in, the user 110 enters the weight into the weight tracker 310. The weight may thereafter be applied to the progress chart 2002 and shown as a point on the line 2004.

A number of targets or milestones may be applied to the line 2004, such as a 5, 10, 25, and 50 pound point as indicated by the stars shown on the progress chart 2002 and identified in the key section 2006. Once the user 110 reaches the goal weight, a star with a "G" is placed on the chart 2002. Additionally, a 10

percent dashed line 2008 is shown on the chart 2002. It should be understood that other milestones and indicators may be utilized, consistent with the rules of the weight control program 115, to provide information to the user 110 to aid and encourage the user 110 to maintain the weight control process. Again, such feedback tools provide the user 110 with gratification and satisfaction in the overall weight control process. If the user 110 sees a week of successful weight control, then the user 110 may select the week via the input control device 230b and associated soft-button or indicia and have the journal 304 display the selected week.

PANIC BUTTON

FIGURE 22 is an exemplary web page 2200 providing a list of titles operating as hyperlinks to information, where the web page 2200 is accessed by selecting a "panic" button 826 of FIGURE 8. If during the course of the user 110 being on the weight control program 115, the user 110 finds him or herself becoming worried, upset, or panicky, the user 110 is provided with the panic button 826 on each of the web pages as provided herein. The user 110 may select the panic button 826 to engage the web page 2200.

On the web page 2200, a number of different selectable items, which may be titles or other indicators that the user 110 may feel is appropriate or related to his or her current feelings, are listed. For example, such titles may include "I Gained This Week" or "None of My Jeans Fit Me Anymore!", which indicate the type of encouragement, story, motivation, or other words of advice that are provided by the weight control software provider 105. By having this online emotional support, the users 110 may tend to feel a sense of comfort in their daily struggle to control their weight.

PUBLIC PROFILE

FIGURE 23 is an exemplary web page 2300 that allows the user 110 to generate public profile information 2302 and selectively make that information public within the community utilizing the weight control software system utilizing check boxes 2304 corresponding therewith. The public profile information may include user name, e-mail address, birthdate, gender, marital status, profession,

favorite recipe, food, activities, etc. Because the user 110 uses a user name, the identity of the user 110 may be protected. Additionally, other types of information may be entered, such as favorite quotes, how the user 110 spends his or her free time, and other items or expressions that the user 110 would like to share with the

5   public community associated with the weight control software system provided by the weight control software provider 105. Because the weight control software system is oriented to weight control information, start weight, current weight, and weight goal also may be shared with the community. Additionally, by sharing such information, including current weight, the user 110 may feel more inspired to

10   continue on with the weight control program 115. Upon completion of generating and selecting public profile information, the user 110 may submit the information to the community via a soft-button 2306.

COMMUNITY RECIPE SWAP AND SEARCH

15   FIGURE 24A is an exemplary web page 2400a for providing community information as enabled by the weight control software system. The community aspect of the weight control software system may be entered by selecting the "Community" site navigational element 806c. In the community, users 110 may find message boards, chat rooms, and a community recipe swap area. The

20   "Community Recipe Swap" page navigational element 808c may be selected so that the user 110 may share and search for recipes provided by users 110. A recent recipe area 2402 provides the most recent recipes submitted to the community. As shown, a recipe name, user name, and date posted provides the user 110 with an indication as to the type of recipe that is posted. The user 110 may simply click on

25   the recipe name operating as a hyperlink to view the recipe itself.

         FIGURE 24B is an exemplary web page 2400b that allows the user 110 to enter a recipe for sharing with the community of FIGURE 24A. As indicated, a number of data entry elements 2408 are available for the user 110 to enter information regarding the recipe. Such recipe information may include a recipe

30   title 2410, the meal course 2412 that the recipe is intended to be served, a number of servings 2414 that the recipe creates, an estimated food value per serving 2416 for the recipe based on the general rules of the weight control program 115, ingredients 2418, instructions for preparing the recipe 2420, and special notes

2422. Upon completion of entering the recipe information, a soft-button 2424 may be selected to submit the recipe to the community.

FIGURE 24C is an exemplary web page 2400c for performing a community recipe search within the community of FIGURE 24A. The search is operable to
5   search information as supplied by users 110 of the community in accordance with the principles of the present invention. As shown, a "browse recipes" element 2426 is operable to limit the search to specific or all recipe categories. The user 110 may select a radio button 2428a or 2428b for searching specific recipe names or user names. In performing the search, the user 110 may enter a recipe name or
10   user name into a text box 2430. To further narrow the search, others values may be submitted in entry fields 2432 based on the general rules of the weight control program 115 (FIGURE 1). The user 110 also may select one or more meal courses to search using checked boxes 2434. Finally, posting dates may be selected via a pull-down menu 2436, which may include a range of dates, such as within the last
15   two weeks. It should be understood that additional and/or alternative search refinement tools may be utilized in accordance with the principles of the present invention.

Upon selecting and entering the information for performing the search, the user 110 may select a soft-button 2438 to perform the search. The results of the
20   search may list a number of recipes, which the user 110 may select and view by clicking on a hyperlink provided by the title. Details of the recipe may then be viewed and printed for the user 110 to utilize in accordance with the weight control program 115.

Because the weight control software system operates, at least in part, on the
25   server 202, the opportunity for the users 110 to provide their personal information in a public forum may be accessed by others on the network 216. Additionally, the personal information may be applied to other community shared information, such as recipes.

The previous description is of preferred embodiments for implementing the
30   principles of the present invention, and the scope of the invention should not necessarily be limited by this description. This invention, however, may be embodied in many different forms and should not be constructed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this

disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art. The scope of the present invention is instead defined by the following claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1.   A system for controlling body weight of a person, said system comprising:

a processor operable to execute software that maintains a meal plan for the person;

a memory unit operable to store data associated with the meal plan;

an input/output device operable to provide an interface for the person to operate the software and receive an updated body weight from the person; and

a display operable to present the meal plan to the person, the meal plan being automatically altered by the processor based on the updated body weight.

2.   The system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a network coupled to the system; and

input/output unit operable to communicate the data associated with the meal plan across the network.

3.   A method for controlling body weight of a person, said method comprising:

receiving an initial body weight of the person;

determining a target food consumption plan for the person based on the initial body weight;

receiving an updated weight of the person; and

automatically altering the target food consumption plan for the person based on the updated weight of the person.

4.   The method according to claim 3, wherein said determining a target food consumption plan includes:

determining a range of values based on the initial body weight of the person; and

selecting food for the person to consume on a daily basis based on the range of values.

5.   The method according to claim 3, further comprising selecting a meal plan from a predetermined set of foods.

6.   The method according to claim 5, wherein the predetermined set of foods is composed of a pre-established set of foods and a user supplied set of foods.

7.   The method according to claim 6, wherein the pre-established set of foods include foods prepared by consumer restaurants.

8.   The method according to claim 3, further comprising communicating a message to the user based on the updated weight of the person.

9.   The method according to claim 3, further comprising:
providing a user selectable indicia operable to be utilized by the person in times of weight control difficulty;
receiving a notification upon the user selectable indicia being selected by the person; and
providing the person at least one selectable element indicative of underlying information.

10.   The method according to claim 3, further comprising:
providing indicia of selectable activities for the person to engage; and
receiving a selection of at least one selectable activity from the user.

11.   The method according to claim 10, further comprising utilizing the selection to alter the amount of consumable food to satisfy the target consumption plan.

12.   A method for managing data utilized by an online personalized weight control program, said method comprising:

receiving identification of a user;

receiving an initial profile representative of characteristics of a user;

forming a dataset based on the initial profile associated with the user;

providing a plurality of interoperable selectable weight control elements for access by the user to personalize the dataset;

receiving data associated with the weight control elements;

updating the dataset in accordance with the received data; and

storing the updated dataset, the updated dataset being utilized by the user to follow a personalized weight control program.

13.   The method according to claim 12, wherein the interoperable selectable weight control elements include at least one of food and exercise items.

14.   The method according to claim 12, wherein the dataset includes predetermined meals each having a total food value associated therewith.

15.   The method according to claim 12, wherein said updating is performed automatically.

16.   The method according to claim 12, wherein the interoperable selectable weight control elements include a journal interface operable to provide a daily listing of foods for consumption in accordance with the personalized weight control program.

17.   The method according to claim 16, wherein the foods are selectably alterable to establish a different daily listing of foods for consumption.

18.   The method according to claim 16, further comprising crediting future daily listings based on a total food value of the daily listing being below a target value.

19.   The method according to claim 18, wherein the target value is a maximum number of values as a function of food consumption and activities allotted by the weight control program.

5   20.   A system for managing data utilized by an online personalized weight control program, said system comprising:

a memory for storing the data utilized by the online personalized weight control program; and

a processor coupled to said memory and operable to execute
10   instructions of the personalized weight control program to:

receive identification of a user;

provide a plurality of interoperable selectable weight control elements for access by the user to personalize the dataset;

receive data associated with the weight control elements;
15   update the dataset in accordance with the received data; and

store the updated dataset, the updated dataset being utilized by the user to follow a personalized weight control program.

21.   The system according to claim 20, wherein the interoperable
20   selectable weight control elements include at least one of food and exercise items.

22.   The system according to claim 20, wherein the dataset includes predetermined meals each having a total food value associated therewith.

25   23.   The system according to claim 20, wherein the interoperable selectable weight control elements include a journal interface operable to provide a daily listing of foods for consumption in accordance with the personalized weight control program.

30   24.   The system according to claim 23, wherein the foods are selectably alterable to establish a different daily listing of foods for consumption.

25.   The system according to claim 23, wherein the processor is further operable to execute instructions to credit future daily listings based on a total food value of the daily listing being below a target value.

5   26.   The system according to claim 25, wherein the target value is a maximum number of values as a function of food consumption and activities allotted by the weight control program.

27.   A method for forming a meal plan based on a weight control
10   program for a participant, said method comprising:

receiving an initial personal profile indicative of characteristics of the participant;

establishing a daily food consumption goal for the participant based on the initial personal profile;

15   forming an alterable meal plan schedule based on at least one component of the initial personal profile, the alterable meal plan schedule being consistent with the daily food consumption goal and utilizing pre-established food combinations having predetermined values associated therewith;

providing the alterable meal plan schedule to the participant; and

20   generating a journal operable to maintain data in response to the participant acknowledging consumption of at least a portion of the pre-established food combinations.

28.   The method according to claim 27, further comprising:
25   providing access to the journal to the participant; and
receiving alterations to the data being maintained by the journal.

29.   The method according to claim 27, further comprising:
receiving a modification to the alterable meal plan schedule; and
30   applying the modification to the alterable meal plan schedule.

30.   The method according to claim 27, further comprising:

receiving an activity performed by the participant having an activity value associated therewith; and

associating the activity to the alterable meal plan schedule.

31.   The method according to claim 30, further comprising:

totaling the predetermined values associated with the pre-established food combinations;

applying the activity value to the total of the predetermined food values to form a net total value; and

providing the net total value to the participant.

32.   The method according to claim 27, further comprising:

receiving an updated characteristic associated with the participant; and

automatically altering the meal plan schedule based on the updated characteristic.

33.   The method according to claim 32, wherein the updated characteristic includes the current weight of the participant.

34.   The method according to claim 27, further comprising:

computing a total food value based on the predetermined values associated with the pre-established food combinations;

receiving an activity performed by the participant;

determining an activity value based on the received activity;

computing a net total value based on the total food value and activity value; and

computing a difference value between the net total value and the daily food consumption goal.

35.   The method according to claim 27, further comprising generating a shopping list based on the alterable meal plan schedule.

36.   A method for providing control of body weight, said method comprising:

receiving a profile from a user, the profile including initial body weight;

5   determining an initial time-based plan as a function of the profile received from the user to control body weight;

selectably providing to the user the time-based plan for controlling body weight; and

modifying the initial time-based plan, in response to user input, to 10   accommodate a user type of the user.

37.   The method according to claim 36, wherein the user type is at least one of a structured and a non-structured user type.

15   38.   The method according to claim 36, further comprising receiving at least one characteristic associated with the user.

39. The method according to claim 36, wherein the modified initial time-based plan is a function of heterogeneous data associated with the user.

20

40.   The method according to claim 39, wherein the heterogeneous data includes user input and predetermined parameters associated with the time-based plan.

25   41.   The method according to claim 39, wherein the user input includes at least one user-defined meal.

42.   A method for operating a weight control program on a network, said method comprising:

30   providing access to a user across a network to a central repository of weight control data associated with the user;

receiving a request via the network for the weight control data associated with the user;

communicating the weight control data to the user;

receiving updated weight control data in response to a user selectively completing an update to the weight control data; and

storing the updated weight control data.

5

43.   The method according to claim 42, wherein the selectively completing is initiated by the user logging off.

44.   The method according to claim 42, wherein said receiving of the
10   request is initiated by the user logging on.

45.   A system for operating a weight control program on a network, said method comprising:

a computing system coupled to the network;

15   a processor operating within said computing system;

a storage unit coupled to said processor, and operable to store a dataset associated with an individual user and in accordance with the weight control program; and

an input/output device operating between said processor and the
20   network, and operable to receive a request from the network for communication of the dataset, said input/output device further operable to communicate the dataset across the network and to receive an updated dataset, said storage unit being operable to store the updated dataset.

25   46.   The system according to claim 45, wherein the request is related to a login of a user of the system.

47.   The system according to claim 45, wherein said input/output device is operable to receive the updated dataset in response to a user logging out of the
30   system.

48.   The system according to claim 45, wherein the dataset includes at least one of the following characteristics of a user: body height, body weight, age, and gender.

5   49.   A method for a user to utilize a weight control program operating on a network, said method comprising:

accessing a central repository of weight control data associated with the user via a network;

requesting via the network the weight control data associated with

10   the user;

receiving the weight control data; and

transmitting updated weight control data in response to an update of the weight control data being completed.

15   50.   The method according to claim 49, wherein the selectively completing is initiated by logging off.

51.   The method according to claim 49, wherein said requesting is initiated by the user logging on.

20

52.   A system for providing a weight control program to a user of a weight control software system, said system comprising:

means for forming a graphical user interface including multiple pages and links therebetween;

25   means for providing a plurality of components operable to enable the user to engage the weight control software system, each component providing a distinct function utilized in executing the graphical user interface; and

means for integrating the components to provide interoperability between the components, the interoperability enabling the data affected by one component

30   to be utilized by each other component to provide the user with a fully integrated weight control system.

53.   The system according to claim 52, wherein the components include at least two of the following: journal, user profiler, weight tracker, meal planner, and targeted message generator.

5   54.   The system according to claim 52, wherein the components consist of a journal, user profiler, and weight tracker.

55.   The system according to claim 52, wherein said means for integrating includes means for forming data sharing links between the components.

10

56.   The system according to claim 52, wherein the components include a journal and meal planner.

57.   A method for providing a weight control program to a user of a

15   weight control software system, said method comprising:

        forming a graphical user interface including multiple pages and links therebetween;

        providing a plurality of components operable to enable the user to engage the weight control software system, each component providing a distinct

20   function utilized in executing the weight control program; and

        integrating the components to provide interoperability between the components, the interoperability enabling the data affected by one component to be utilized by each other component to provide the user with a fully integrated weight control system.

25

58.   The method according to claim 57, wherein said integrating includes forming data sharing links between the components.

59.   A database operable to maintain data associated with a weight

30   control program operated by a weight control software system, said database comprising:

        a plurality of datasets, each dataset being uniquely associated with individual users of the weight control program, a dataset including identification of

the user, characteristics of the user, demographics of the user, and an alterable list of meals established for the user to consume in accordance with the weight control program, the alterable list of meals being established as a function of at least one of the characteristics and demographics of the user.

5

60.   The database according to claim 59, wherein the alterable list of meals includes food items and associated food values.

61.   The database according to claim 59, wherein each dataset includes a

10   desired range of food consumption.

62.   The database according to claim 61, wherein a summation of the food values for a given day is within the desired range.

15   63.   A method for sharing recipes of a user of a weight control program with a community of users on a network, said method comprising:

        receiving at least one recipe from the user to be shared with other users on the network;

        presenting a selectable list of data items, including body weight, to

20   the user;

        receiving the list of data having a corresponding indication of data items selected therefrom;

        determining the selected data items; and

        storing the at least one recipe and selected data items on an address

25   located on the network to be accessible to the community.

64.   The method according to claim 63, further comprising distributing the selected data items to the community.

30   65.   The method according to claim 63, wherein said receiving of the at least one recipe includes receiving food items having associated food values from the user to form the ingredients of the recipe.

66.   The method according to claim 65, further comprising posting the recipe to a message board.

67.   The method according to claim 63, wherein said storing of the at least one recipe includes storing of a food value for the recipe calculated by a processor on the network using nutritional data for the ingredients of the recipe, the nutritional data being stored on the network.

68.   A system for generating and displaying a single, composite nutritional indicator for a serving of a multiple ingredient recipe, the recipe being supplied by the user of the system, said system comprising:

a user interface for receiving from the user the identity and amount of the ingredients of the recipe and serving size information;

a database containing nutritional data for common recipe ingredients including the recipe ingredients identified by the user;

a processor for calculating the single, composite nutritional indicator for a serving of the recipe from the user information and the database data; and

a display field for displaying the calculated composite nutritional indicator for a serving of the recipe.

69.   The method according to claim 68, wherein the calculation of the composite nutritional indicator takes into account plural nutritional parameters for each ingredient and wherein the composite nutritional indicator is utilized in planning daily food intake to achieve weight control.

70.   The system according to claim 68, further comprising a computational software element operable to compute the single, composite nutritional indicator.

71.   The system according to claim 70, wherein the user interface further includes individual nutritional indicator display fields operable to display the nutritional indicators associated with each ingredient of the recipe.

72.   The system according to claim 70, wherein the user interface further includes selectable indicia operable to be selected to include or remove the ingredients of the recipe.

5   73.   The system according to claim 68, the user interface includes a selectable list of the ingredients associated with at least one of a food manufacturer and a restaurant.

74.   The system according to claim 68, further comprising a second
10   database operable to maintain a history of consumption of the multiple ingredient recipes and associated single, composite nutritional indicators.

75.   A system for controlling body weight of a person, said system comprising a computing device operable to execute a software program having a
15   plurality of software elements operable to control body weight of the person, the software elements operable to control body weight of the person utilizing at least two sources of input, a first input source being a planned set of food items to be consumed based on a current weight of the person and a second input source being an actual set of food items consumed by the person, the software elements further
20   operable to receive updated weight of the person to alter the planned set of food items for future food item consumption.

76.   The system according to claim 75, wherein the software elements are further operable to control body weight of the person utilizing a third source of
25   input being actual activities performed by the person.

77.   The system according to claim 76, wherein one software element is a journal operable to maintain information associated with the input sources.

30   78.   The system according to claim 75, wherein the software elements are operable to compute a food consumption value to be consumed based on food values associated with the actual food items consumed by the person.
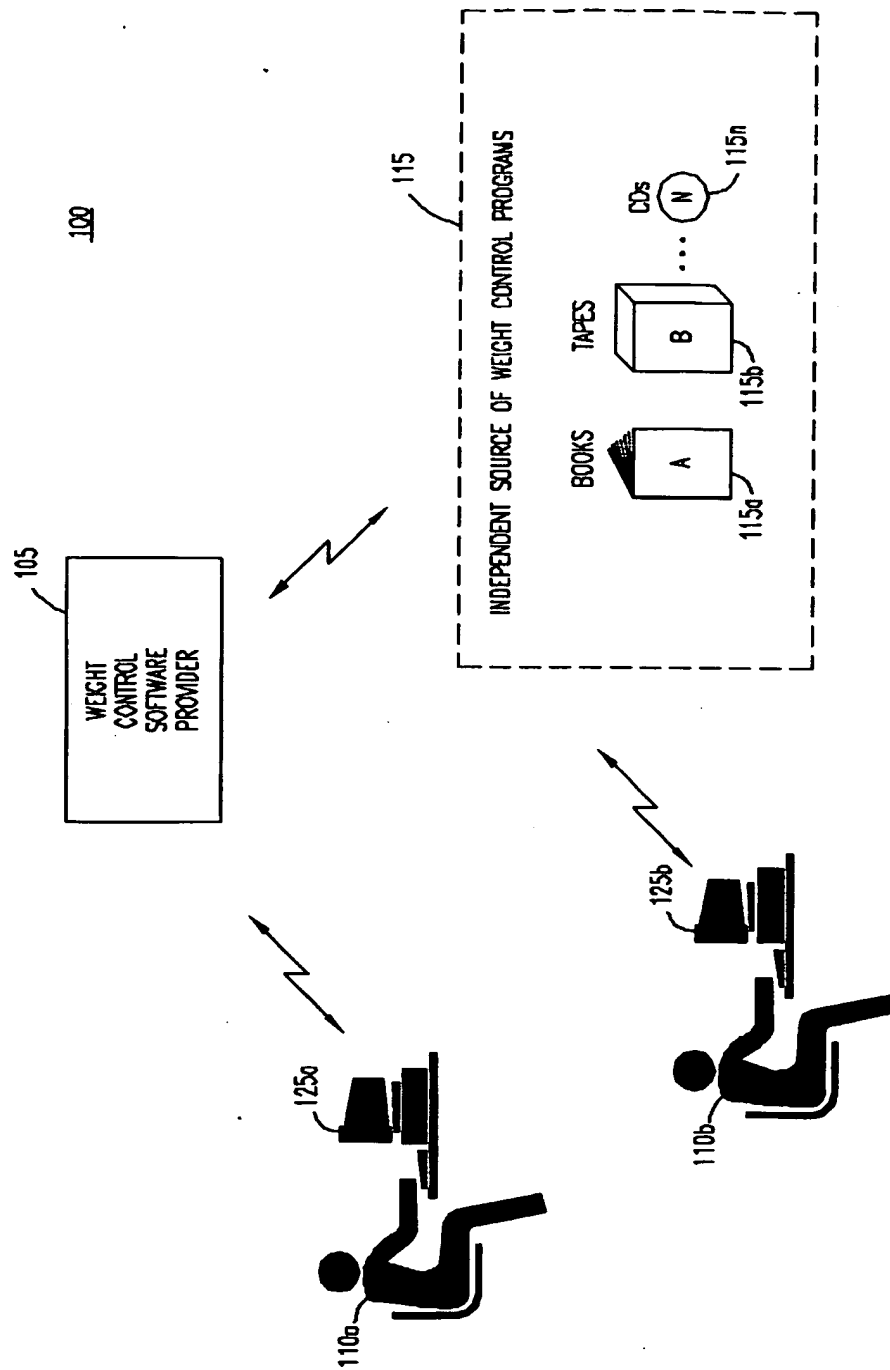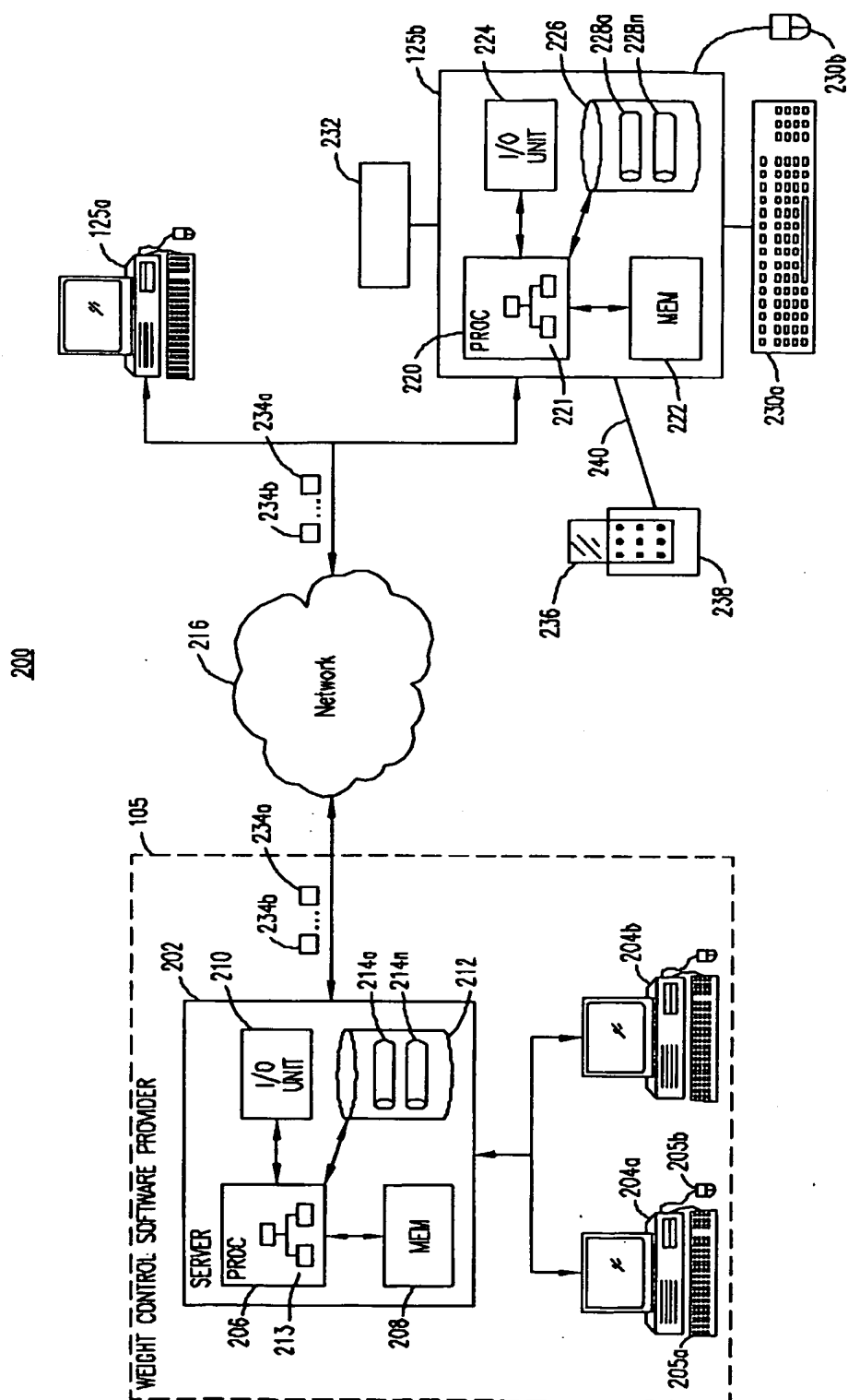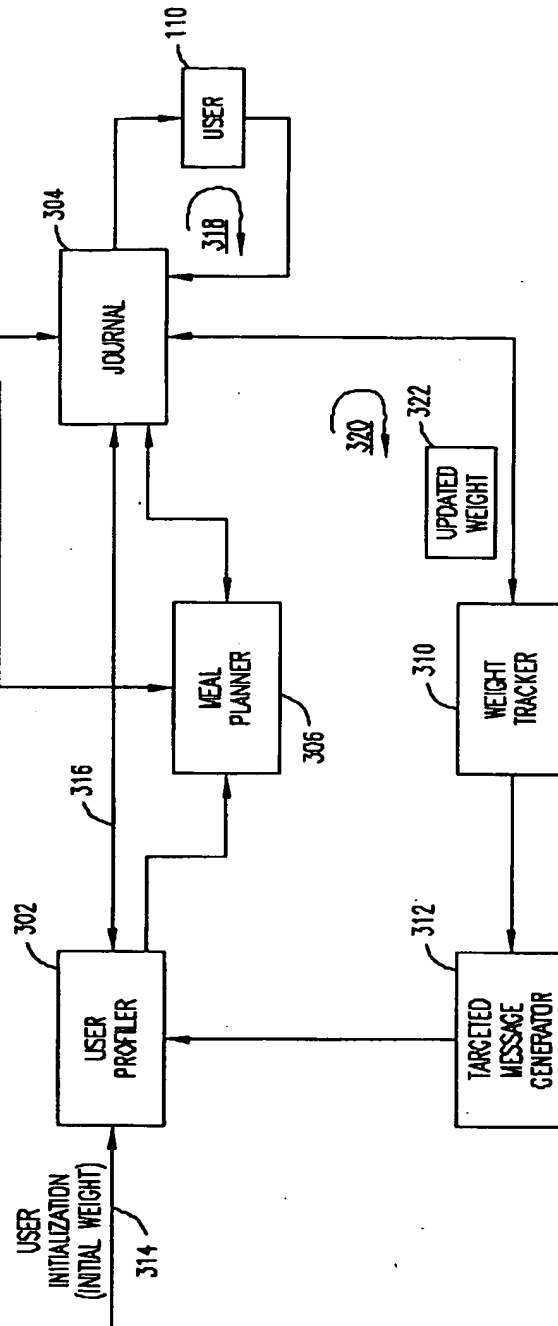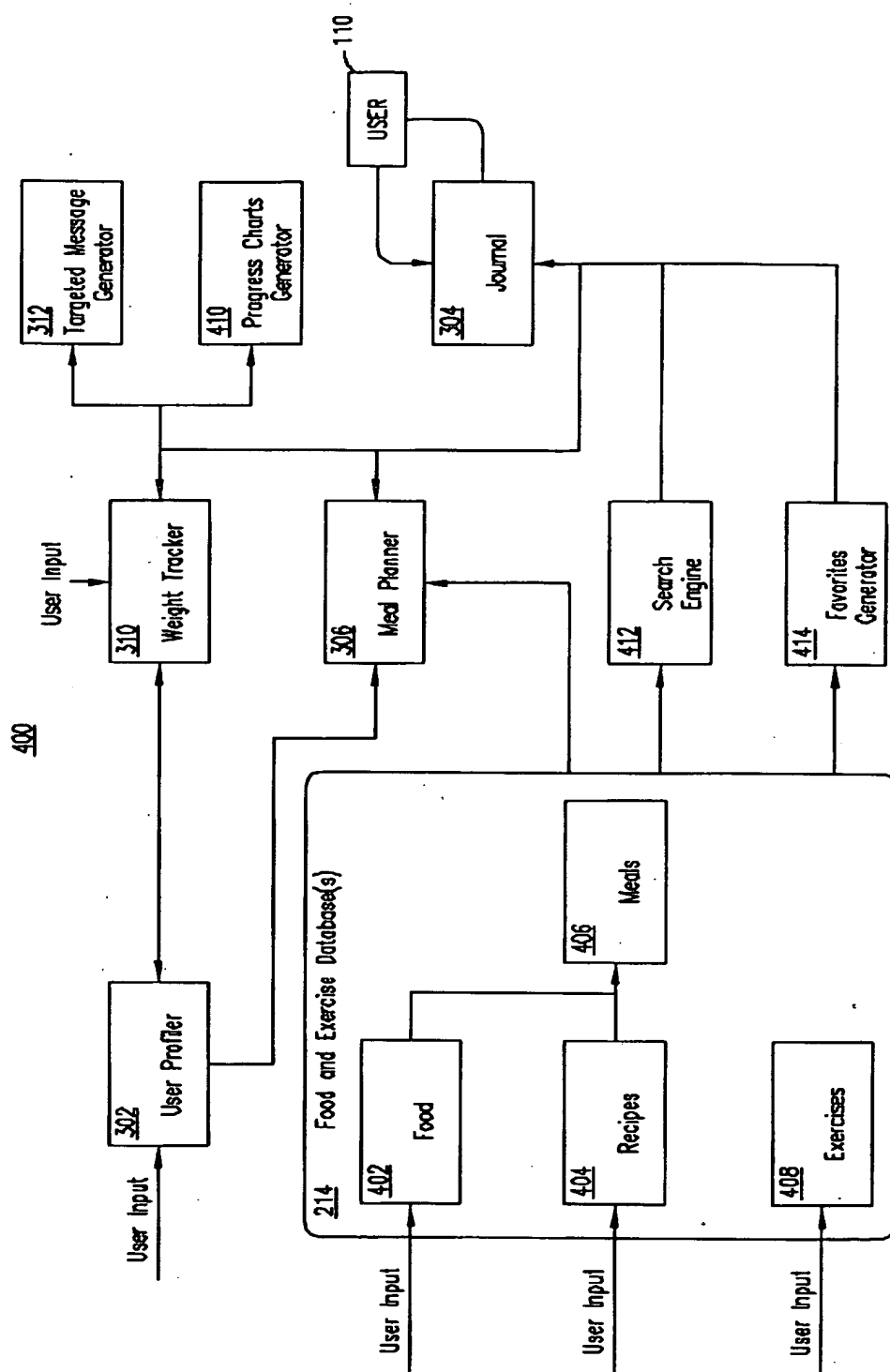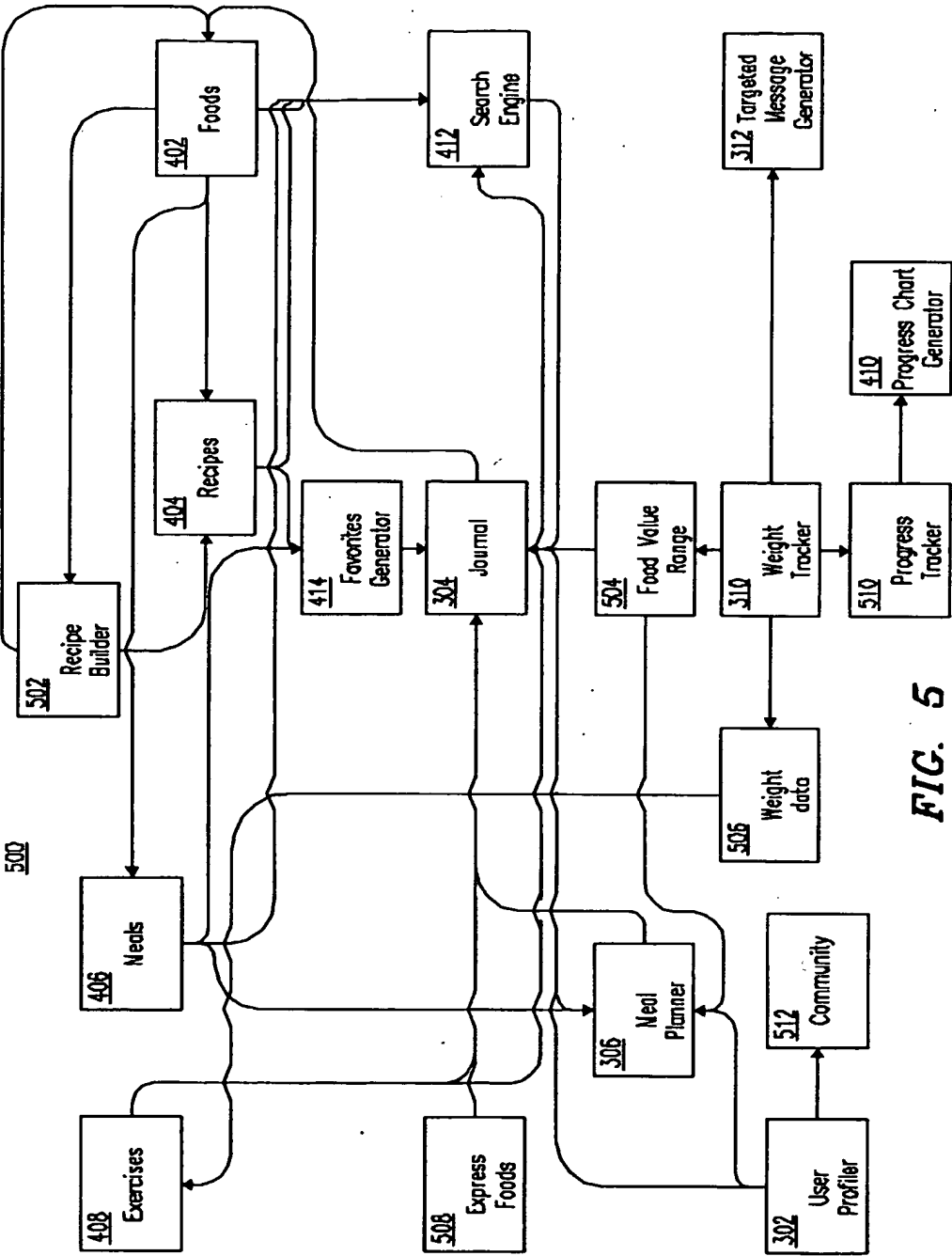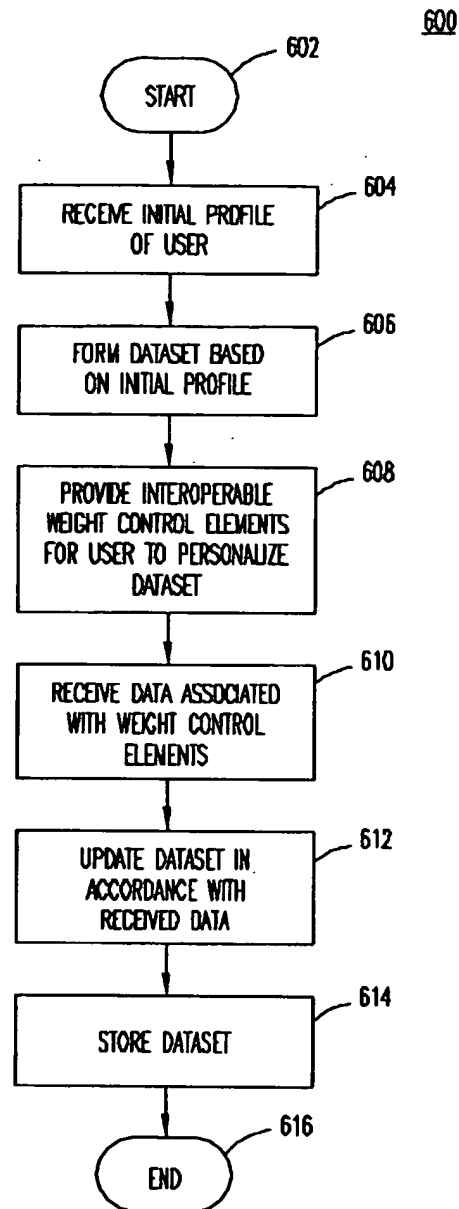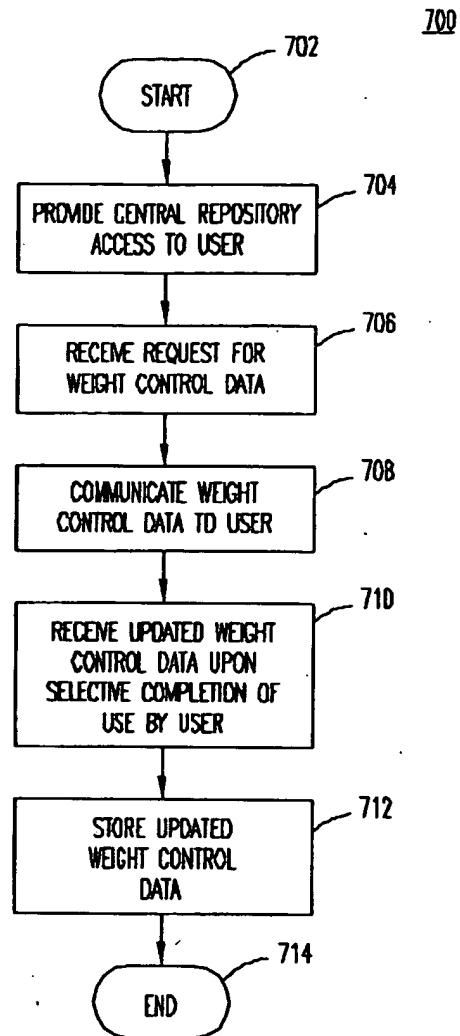
100

105

WEIGHT
CONTROL
SOFTWARE
PROVIDER

115

INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAMS

BOOKS

A

115a

TAPES

B

115b

CDs

N

115n

125a

125b

110a

110b

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

_700_

```
                    ┌─────────┐
                    │  START  │────── 702
                    └─────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌───────────────────────┐
              │ PROVIDE CENTRAL       │────── 704
              │ REPOSITORY            │
              │ ACCESS TO USER        │
              └───────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌───────────────────────┐
              │ RECEIVE REQUEST FOR   │────── 706
              │ WEIGHT CONTROL DATA   │
              └───────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌───────────────────────┐
              │ COMMUNICATE WEIGHT    │────── 708
              │ CONTROL DATA TO USER  │
              └───────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌───────────────────────┐
              │ RECEIVE UPDATED       │────── 710
              │ WEIGHT CONTROL DATA   │
              │ UPON SELECTIVE        │
              │ COMPLETION OF         │
              │ USE BY USER           │
              └───────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
              ┌───────────────────────┐
              │ STORE UPDATED         │────── 712
              │ WEIGHT CONTROL        │
              │ DATA                  │
              └───────────────────────┘
                         │
                         ▼
                    ┌─────────┐
                    │   END   │────── 714
                    └─────────┘
```

FIG. 7

806   800   802 →   find a meeting|about us| my profile|site map|help   [LOGIN]
                                                                            804
   home (the plan) community   sucess stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   [panic]

Journal|Weight Tracker|Progress Charts|My Favorites| POINTS Calculators|Assessment|Tools for Living ——808
                                                                                                      826

step 6 of 6 confirm your information

Please confirm that all details you entered are correct. Click the "make changes" link below to make
corrections

Current Weight Information   ⟋810
              Current Weight: 223lb
                       Height: 5'8"
                      Gender: M
                   Birthdate: 7/14/1966
Make changes to Weight Information
- -
Personal Information   ⟋812   814 ⟍   Other Characteristics
             First name: John   Attitude: Generally Happy
              Last name: Smith   Athletic: Yes
               Address: 1 MAIN ST.   Eye color: Blue
                   City: Anytown   Hair color: Brown
                  State: NY
        Zip code home: 12345   814 ⟍   Other Demographics
         Zip code work: 12346   Race: Caucasian
              Country: United States   Religion: Catholic
                Phone: (212) 555-1234   Ethnicity: Irish
               E-mail: jsmith@workplace.com   Blood type: A+
      Receive Information: No   816 ⟍
  E-mail Weight Loss Progress: No   Health Restrictions
           E-mail Format: text   818 ⟍   None
             Profession: Professional (e.g., doctor,lawyer)
            Marital status: Single   Desired Meal Plan Type
        Number of children: 0   Regular
          Lifetime Member: 98765
      Meeting Member number: 98765
Make changes to Personal Information
- -
Payment Information   ⟋822
              Credit Card: Visa
         Credit card number: ***********1111
           Expiration date: 2/2002
Name as it appears on the card: John Q Smith
             Billing Address: 1 MAIN ST.
                   City: Anytown
                  State: NY
                Zip code: 12345
Make changes to Payment Information
- -
Total Subscription Charges for   ⟋824
    Monthly Fee: $8.00 x 6=: $48.00
      Savings/Discount: $0.00
             Taxes: $0.00
       Total Charges: $48.00

FIG. 8

900a

File   Edit   View   Go   Favorites   Help

Back   Forward   Stop   Refresh   Home   Search   Favorites   Media   History   Mail   Print   Edit

Address   http://

806

806b

802 — find a meeting | about us | my profile | site map | help   LOGOUT

home   my plan   community   success stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   panic

Journal | Weight Tracker | Progress Charts | My Favorites | POINTS® Calculators | Assessment | Tools for Living | Intro to eTools

808a   808

914

my journal   ◄ Friday, Jan 25, 2002 ►   Target: 27   Range: 22-27   Bank: 3   print day / print blank journal   user guide

904a   904b   904c   904d   906

| Add Food | Add Exercise | Notes | Calendar |

Step 1: Select a meal time: 908

920 — ⊙ Morning   ○ Midday   ○ Evening   ○ Snack

Step 2: To add food, you can either:

- Search our food database
  [toast] [FIND]

- Select a favorite:
  [Select from My Favorites ▼] [ADD]   Edit Favorites

- Express it. Enter your food and its POINTS value:
  Food   POINTS:
  [ ] [ ] [ADD]
  • POINTS Calculator

Need Help? Go to the Journal User Guide

Find tips from others on the Weight Watchers eTools Tip Exchange

DELETE CHECKED ITEMS — 918   SAVE & BANK

☐ Check All 910	Total Food POINTS used	24
Morning	912	
☐ 1 medium pear(s)		1
☐ 1 cup light artificially sweetened yogurt		2
☐ 1/2 cup General Mills Whole Grain Total		1
☐ 6 average almonds		1
MAKE THIS MEAL A FAVORITE	Subtotal	5
Midday		
☐ 6 oz baked potato		3
☐ 1 oz low-fat cheddar or colby cheese		1
☐ 1/2 cup cooked broccoli		0
☐ 2 cup mixed greens		0
☐ 1 tsp olive oil		1
☐ Tbsp vinegar		0
☐ 1 medium orange(s)		1
MAKE THIS MEAL A FAVORITE	Subtotal	6

916

Internet

FIG. 9

1000

START ~1002

RECEIVE INITIAL PERSONAL PROFILE INCLUDING CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANT ~1004

RULES, CONVENTIONS, AND GUIDELINES OF WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAMS ~1005

ESTABLISH DAILY FOOD CONSUMPTION GOAL FOR PARTICIPANT ~1006

STRUCTURED USER ? ~1007

NO

YES

SET JOURNAL PARAMETERS BASED ON FOOD CONSUMPTION GOAL ~1014

FORM MEAL PLANS CONSISTENT WITH FOOD CONSUMPTION GOAL ~1008

PROVIDE ABILITY TO SEARCH DATABASES FOR USER-CREATED MEALS ~1016

PROVIDE MEAL PLANS TO USERS ~1010

USER FORMS MEAL PLAN

1018

END ~1012

FIG. 10

900b

FIG. 11

900c

FIG. 12

900d

FIG. 13

1400   806e   find a meeting|about us| my profile|site map|help   [LOGOUT]

home   my plan   community   sucess stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   panic

Articles|Recipes|Meal Plans|Recipe Renovation|Recipe Search|Recipe Builder

my shortcuts [LOGOUT]
to weight loss tools.

Welcome Kevin!
I'm not Kevin| edit profile
Pick my product! 1404
MY TOOLS
JOURNAL
WEIGHT TRACKER
MEAL PLANS
POINTS CALCULATORS
RECIPE SEARCH
RECIPE BUILDER
MY RESOURCES
Intro to eTools
Tools for Living
Hot eTools Topic of the Week
Eating Out Guide
eTools Tip
Exchange
    edit
[Favorite Recipes ▼]
    edit
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[   ] ⊙
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meal plans   808c

my 7-day meal plan

Using a meal plan is simple way to kick-start your weight loss. Whether you follow the meal plan to the better or simply use it for ideas and inspiration is up to you. For help using the meal plan, see our meal plan user guide.

view next week's plan | See Daily View ▼ | ⊕ print ⊚

Jan 23 - Jan 29

[add plan to my journal]

1402

	POINTS
☑ WEDNESDAY	23
☐ MORNING: Cheese Omelet	6
☑ MIDDAY: Veggie Chili	5
☑ EVENING: Apricot Turkey Br...	7
☑ SNACK: Snacks and Treats	5

	POINTS		POINTS
☑ THURSDAY	23	☑ FRIDAY	24
☑ MORNING: Almond Apricot Flakes	6	☑ MORNING: Yogurt Topped Fruit	5
☑ MIDDAY: Turkey Roller	5	☑ MIDDAY: Cheese & Broc ...	6
☑ EVENING: Orange-Lemon Scallops	7	☑ EVENING: Spicy Pork Sauté	8
☑ SNACK: Throughout the Day	5	☑ SNACK: Savory Snacks	5

	POINTS		POINTS
☑ SATURDAY	24	☑ SUNDAY	24
☑ MORNING: From the Coffee Shop	5	☑ MORNING: Roots Not Flakes	6
☑ MIDDAY: Grilled Swordfish ...	6	☑ MIDDAY: Turkey Sandwich w ...	5
☑ EVENING: Indian Take-Out	8	☑ EVENING: Baked Beef Fajita	8
☑ SNACK: On the Go	5	☑ SNACK: Sweets and Treats	5

	POINTS		POINTS
☑ MONDAY	23	☑ TUESDAY	24
☑ MORNING: Apricot Yogurt Sundae	5	☑ MORNING: Apple-Almond Topp ...	6
☑ MIDDAY: Super Salad	6	☑ MIDDAY: Bacon & Grill ...	5
☑ EVENING: Quick Rice Bistro ...	7	☑ EVENING: Turkey-Squash Sti ...	8
☑ SNACK: Crunchy Snacks	5	☑ SNACK: Sweet and Salty S ...	5

[add plan to my journal]

view next week's plan | See Daily View ▼ | ⊕ print ⊚

need help?
⊚ Learn more and answer questions in our meal plan user guide.
■ meal plan user guide
meal planner profile
Plan for| No-Plan
Special diet|Regular
POINTS range|22-27
■ edit meal plan profile
■ about meal plans

FIG. 14

1500a   find a meeting | about us | my profile | site map | help   [LOGOUT]

home   my plan   community   sucess stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   (panic)

Articles | Recipes | Meal Plans | Recipe Renovation | Recipe Search | Recipe Builder

my shortcuts [LOGOUT]
to weight loss tools.

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MY TOOLS

| JOURNAL |
| WEIGHT TRACKER |
| MEAL PLANS |
| POINTS CALCULATORS |
| RECIPE SEARCH |
| RECIPE BUILDER |

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meal plans

my 7-day meal plan

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----

next day | weekly view   ©

WED Jan 29 | 23 POINTS   [update my meal plan] ~1504

☑ **MORNING:**   [Swap for another meal?   ▼] ~1502

                           POINTS

Cheese Omlet   6
- 3 medium egg white(s)   1
- 1 tsp basil   0
- 1 oz low-fat cheddar or colby cheese   1
- 1 slice high-fiber bread   1
- 1 cup canned fruit cocktail, packed in water   1
- 1 cup low-fat milk   2

☑ **MIDDAY:**   [Swap for another meal?   ▼]

                           POINTS

Veggie Chili   5
- 1 cup Health Valley MM Vegetarian Chili   2
- 1 cup fresh vegetable sticks   0
- 1 Tbsp reduced-calorie salad dressing   1
- 1 cup grapes   1
- 1 slice toasted wheat bread   1
- 1 Tbsp I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! Fat-Free Margarine   0

☑ **EVENING:**   [Swap for another meal?   ▼]

                           POINTS

Apricot Turkey Breast with Cinnamon Squash   7
- 4 oz boneless, skinless turkey breast(s)   3
- 1 Tbsp apricot jam   1
- 1 tsp ground ginger   0
- 3/4 medium acorn squash   2
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon   0
- 1 Tbsp light butter   1
- 1 1/2 cup green snap beans   0

☑ **SNACK:**   [Swap for another meal?   ▼]

                           POINTS

Snacks and Treats   5
- 1 cup 0-POINT soup   0
- 1 cup fresh vegetable sticks   0

need help?
Learn more and answer questions in our meal plan user guide.
- meal plan user guide
meal planner profile
Plan for | Me-Plan
Special diet | Regular
POINTS range | 22-27
- edit meal plan profile
- about meal plans

FIG. 15A

1500b

FIG. 15B

900e

FIG. 16A

9001

FIG. 16B

1700   find a meeting|about us| my profile| site map |help [LOGOUT]

home   my plan   community   suess stories | food & recipes | healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   (panic)

Articles|Recipes|Meal Plans|Recipe Renovation|Recipe Search|Recipe Builder
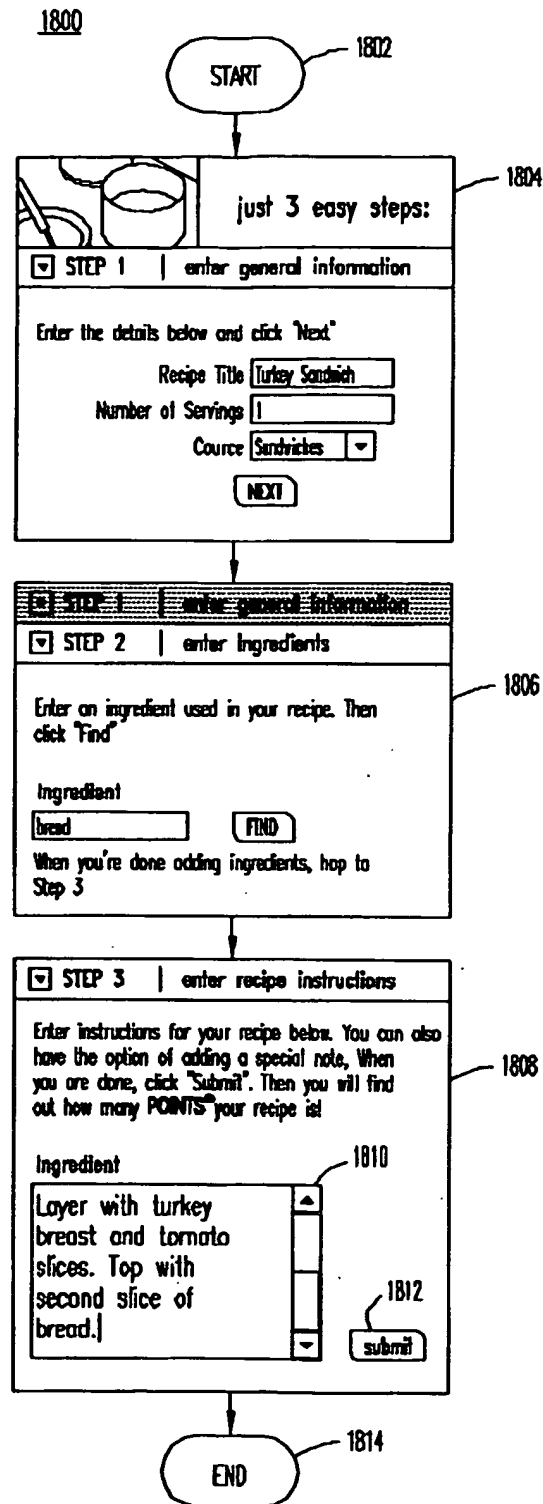
[my shortcuts [LOGOUT]
to weight loss tools]

Welcome Kevin!
I'm not Kevin|edit profile
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| WEIGHT TRACKER |
| MEAL PLANS |
| POINTS CALCULATORS |
| RECIPE SEARCH |
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[favorite Boards   ▼]

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[   ] (▶)

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recipes
results of search or browse

Search Details: Keywords: chicken. Points Range: 5 to 7

Your search returned 48 recipes   page 1 of 3   prev   next

Browse   [Search Keywords: [chicken]]
[All   ▼] (FIND)   [POINTS range: [5] to [7] (FIND)]

Looking for mor options? Refine your search.   ⟍1702

Recipe, POINTS per serving	Course	Time
Apple Braised Chicken, 5	Main Meals	55 min
Baked Chicken with Sun dried Tomato Sauce, 5	Main Meals	30 min
Barbecue Chicken and Black Bean Pizza, 7	Main Meals	30 min
Basque Chicken, 7	Main Meals	45 min
Chicken and Dumplings, 5	Main Meals	40 min
Chicken and Sausage Gumbo, 6	Main Meals, Soups	33 min
Chicken Burritos, 5	Main Meals	37 min
Chicken Enchiladas, 7	Main Meals	60 min
Chicken Fajitas, 6	Main Meals	25 min
Chicken Fingers with Barbecue Sauce, 5	Main Meals	22 min
Chicken in Apricot Sauce, 5	Main Meals	45 min
Chicken Jambalaya, 6	Main Meals	50 min
Chicken Mole Wraps, 7	Main Meals	31 min
Chicken Paella, 7	Main Meals	330 min
Chicken Parmigiana Sandwich, 6	Sandwiches	35 min
Chicken Poppers, 6	Main Meals, Side Dishes	20 min
Chicken Pot Pie, 6	Main Meals	65 min
Chicken Salad in Whole-Wheat Bread Bowl, 5	Main Meals	20 min
Chicken Saute with Pine Nuts, 6	Main Meals	25 min
Chicken Stewed with Artichokes and Tomatoes, 5	Main Meals	50 min

Browse   Search Keywords: [chicken]
[All   ▼] (FIND)   POINTS range: [5] to[7]   (FIND)

Looking for mor options? Refine your search.

Your search returned 48 recipes   page 1 of 3   prev   next

FIG. 17

<u>1800</u>

START — 1802

1804

just 3 easy steps:

☑ STEP 1 | enter general information

Enter the details below and click "Next"

Recipe Title [Turkey Sandwich]
Number of Servings [1]
Course [Sandwiches ▼]

[NEXT]

☑ STEP 1 | enter general information

☑ STEP 2 | enter Ingredients

Enter an ingredient used in your recipe. Then click "Find"

Ingredient

[bread]   [FIND]

When you're done adding ingredients, hop to Step 3

1806

☑ STEP 3 | enter recipe instructions

Enter instructions for your recipe below. You can also have the option of adding a special note, When you are done, click "Submit". Then you will find out how many POINTS® your recipe is!

1808

Ingredient — 1810

Layer with turkey breast and tomato slices. Top with second slice of bread.| ▲ ▼

1812

[submit]

END — 1814

FIG. 18

_806b_   **1900**   find a meeting | about us | my profile | site map | help   [LOGOUT]

home | my plan | community   success stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   (panic)

Journal | Weight Tracker | Progress Charts | My Favorites | POINTS® Calculators | Assessment | Tools for Living | Intro to eTools
_806b_

my shortcuts [LOGOUT]
to weight loss tools

Welcome Kevin!
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Pick my avatar!

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| WEIGHT TRACKER |
| MEAL PLANS |
| POINTS® CALCULATORS |
| RECIPE SEARCH |
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eTools Tip
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                     edit
[Favorite Boards   ▼]
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[   ] ⊙
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weight tracker Wednesday, January 16, 2002

Total weight loss
⬛ **10.0** LBS.

Most recent weight: 221.6lbs on 1/14/2002
POINTS Range: 22-27
Meeting day: Monday   ╲_1902

Milestones: ☆ 5

| Thank You   (lll) VIEW PROGRESS CHARTS |

Thank you for logging your weight this week!
Please return next Monday to log your weight.
Share stories on Tales from the Scale

▷ ENTER PREVIOUS WEIGHT

health & safety

we put your
health and
safety first.
Learn about
how your
weight and weight-
loss efforts can affect
your health.
■ What's your BMI
■ Effects of Rapid Weight
Loss

**getting to
weight goal**

Whether
you lost big
this week or
were a little
disappointed,
remember to take
time out to get
inspired all over
again.
■ 18 Ways to Reward
Yourself
■ Create a Motivating
Strategy

**learn more,
weigh less**

Make the
scale your
friend each
week by
getting tips
from weight-loss
experts and fellow
dieters alike!
■ The Great Weigh-in
■ 20 Weight Loss Tips
from Real Meeting-
Goers!

■ Main
■ View & Edit Weights
■ Enter Previous Weights
■ Additional Information

weight loss profile
■ Starting weight: 223
■ 10% difference: 200.7
■ Weight goal: 150.9
■ Weight lost: 2
■ Edit My Profile

Beyond the scale
Get a better grip on your
weight-loss success the next
time you carry groceries.
Click the pounds to see what
you'd have to lift.

1lb | 5lb | 10lb | 25lb

[4 sticks of butter]

Change your country
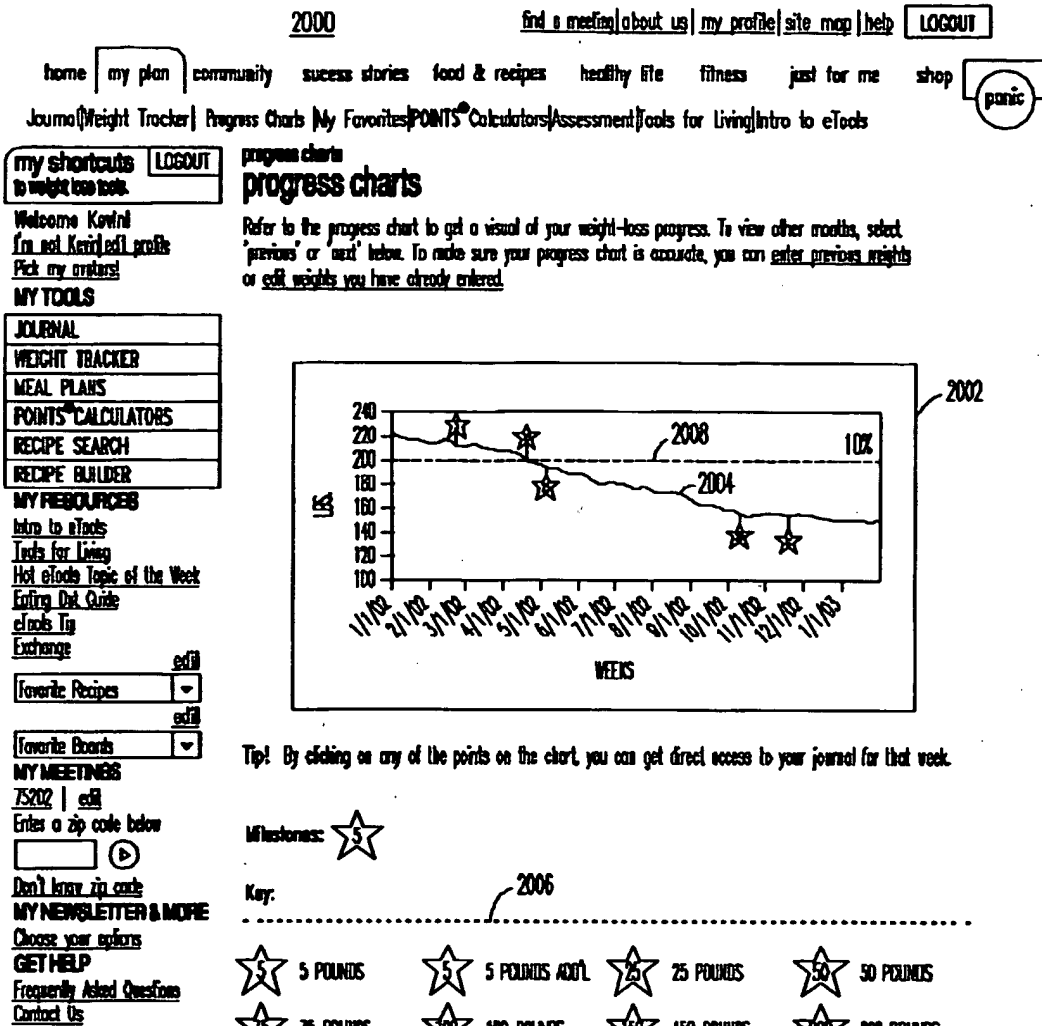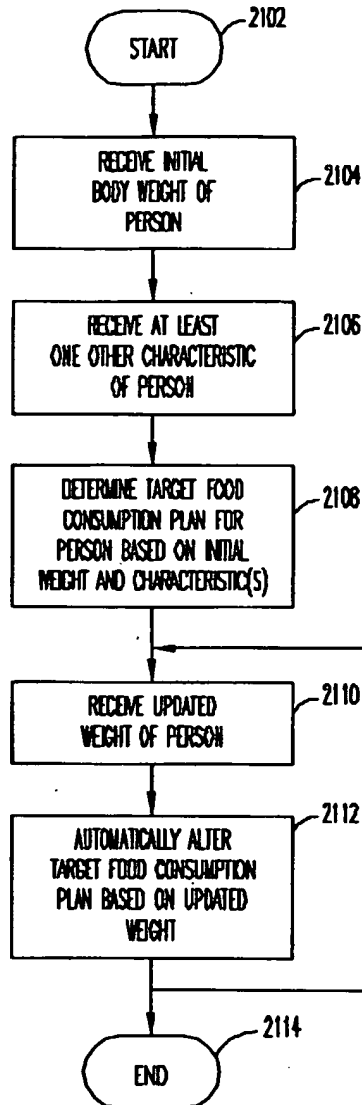Terms & Conditions | Privacy | For subscribers only: Subscription Agreement

FIG. 19

2000   find a meeting | about us | my profile | site map | help   LOGOUT

home | my plan | community   sucess stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   panic

Journal | Weight Tracker | Progress Charts | My Favorites | POINTS® Calculators | Assessment | Tools for Living | Intro to eTools

my shortcuts   LOGOUT
to weight loss tools

Welcome Kevin!
I'm not Kevin | edit profile
Pick my avatars!
MY TOOLS

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| WEIGHT TRACKER |
| MEAL PLANS |
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| RECIPE SEARCH |
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Favorite Boards   ▼
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progress charts
progress charts

Refer to the progress chart to get a visual of your weight-loss progress. To view other months, select 'previous' or 'next' below. To make sure your progress chart is accurate, you can enter previous weights or edit weights you have already entered.

Tip! By clicking on any of the points on the chart, you can get direct access to your journal for that week.

Milestones: ☆

Key: 2006

☆ 5 POUNDS	☆ 5 POUNDS ADD'L	☆ 25 POUNDS	☆ 50 POUNDS
☆ 75 POUNDS	☆ 100 POUNDS	☆ 150 POUNDS	☆ 200 POUNDS
☆ 75 POUNDS	☆ 10% TARGET		

FIG. 20

2100

```
        ┌─────────┐ ─2102
        │  START  │
        └─────────┘
             │
             ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐ ─2104
    │   RECEIVE INITIAL │
    │   BODY WEIGHT OF  │
    │      PERSON       │
    └──────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐ ─2106
    │  RECEIVE AT LEAST │
    │ ONE OTHER CHARACTERISTIC│
    │     OF PERSON     │
    └──────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐ ─2108
    │  DETERMINE TARGET FOOD │
    │  CONSUMPTION PLAN FOR │
    │  PERSON BASED ON INITIAL │
    │ WEIGHT AND CHARACTERISTIC(S)│
    └──────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐ ─2110
    │  RECEIVE UPDATED  │
    │  WEIGHT OF PERSON │
    └──────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
    ┌──────────────────┐ ─2112
    │  AUTOMATICALLY ALTER │
    │ TARGET FOOD CONSUMPTION │
    │   PLAN BASED ON UPDATED │
    │       WEIGHT      │
    └──────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
        ┌─────────┐ ─2114
        │   END   │
        └─────────┘
```

FIG. 21

2200　　　　　　　find a meeting | about us | my profile | site map | help　[LOGOUT]

home　my plan　community　sucess stories　food & recipes　healthy life　fitness　just for me　shop

826　　panic

my shortcuts [LOGOUT]
to weight loss tools.

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2202

don't *panic!*

...we know how hard it can be.

Never trade what you want at the moment
for what you want most.

Everyone has moments of panic or days of stress, or even weeks when they're just frantic. That's why we've created the "Panic Page." It will help point you down the right path when you're stressed out about your weight loss.

First of all, we're here to provide the connections you need in order to talk to others who've been there. Get in touch and talk it over on our message boards and in our chat rooms.

And read up on your rough spots, too. Here are some potential "Panic" situations. If one sounds familiar, click on the link for some sound solutions.

- I want to lose weight, but I can't seem to get started.
- My weight-loss is at a standstill.
- I've fallen off the wagon.
- I'm thinking of quitting.
- I gained this week.
- I can't do this.
- I just ate a whole chocolate cake.
- I can't stop overeating!
- Everybody I know is losing weight except me.
- I'm stressed!
- My family and friends keep bringing me food.
- My spouse doesn't seem to want me to lose weight.
- I'm planning a vacation. How will I stay on track while away?
- My friends have asked me to go out to eat with them.

- I have zero POINTS left for the day!
- Somebody just said something really hurtful to me.
- None of my jeans fit me anymore!
- I'm too big to fit into a bus seat.
- I'm going to have to stand in front of a crowd. People will notice me.
- I feel so lonely.
- I'm bored with trying to lose weight.
- I'm frustrated with trying to lose weight.
- I hate exercising.
- I've lost my motivation.
- I feel thinner and look thinner, but I'm not losing pounds.

your best resource
Thousands of people just like you use our chat and message boards for inspiration and encouragement. See how they tackled the problems you face.
- chat with others now
- go to newbie board

your best resource
Our leaders provide the best answers to all your questions about weight loss.
- find a meeting

get help
Panicking cause you're having problems using some of the tools on our site?
- frequently asked questions
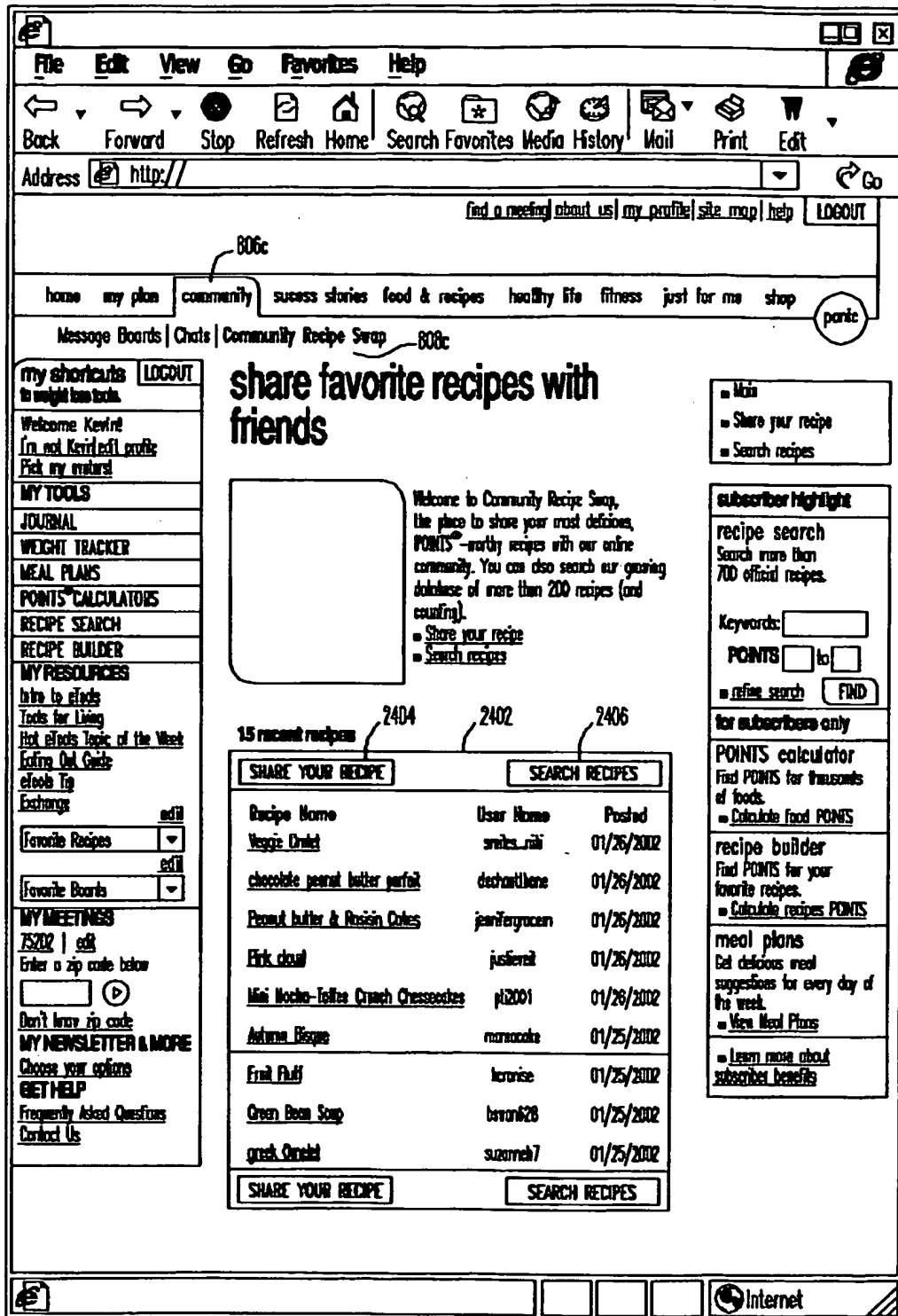
FIG. 22

2300

File   Edit   View   Go   Favorites   Help

Back   Forward   Stop   Refresh   Home   Search   Favorites   Media   History   Mail   Print   Edit

Address   http://

find a meeting | about us | my profile | site map | help   LOGOUT

home   my plan   community   success stories   food & recipes   healthy life   fitness   just for me   shop   (panic)

Journal|Weight Tracker|Progress Charts|My Favorites|POINTS Calculators|Assessment|Tools for Living|Intro to eTools

my shortcuts   LOGOUT
to weight loss tools.

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my profile
edit public profile

Select another page in my profile... ▼

Your public profile lets others using the site learn about you. To make a detail appear in your profile, check the "Add to public profile" box. You can also enter fun details, such as your favorite quote, below. When you are done, click "Submit."

Important: Any information you can consent to being publicly available can be seen by any user on this website. Learn more about public profiles.

        2304   2302   [submit]

make
public   User name: John Smith
  ☒   E-mail address: jsmith@workplace.com
  ☐   Birthdate: 07/14/66
  ☒   Gender: Male
  ☒   Marital status: Single
  ☒   Number of children: 0
  ☒   Profession: Professional (e.g. doctor, lawyer)
  ☐   Astrological sign: Cancer
  ☐   My home page: http://www.workplace.com
  ☒   Astrological sign: [Beam me up, Scottie   ▲
                                                           ▼]

Enter your start, goal and current weights below. It will display in this order in your signature: 180/169.4/141

        Start weight: [223] lbs
        Current weight: [221] lbs
        Weight goal: [150] lbs   2306

                              [submit]

Internet

FIG. 23

2400a

FIG. 24A

2400b

FIG. 24B

2400c

FIG. 24C